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WOMAN IN THE THOUGHT AND WORK OF FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

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PREFACE

The subject of this thesis was suggested by Professor A. R. Hohlfeld, of the University of Wisconsin. The original plan included a similar treatment of woman in the thought and work of Kleist and Ibsen. The former illustrates well the attitude toward woman which prevailed at the beginning of the century, while Ibsen portrays woman as she appeared at the end of the century. The adequate treatment of Hebbel's views proved, however, a task of such dimensions that I have omitted for the present the sections on Kleist and Ibsen, but intend to publish them shortly.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professors A. R. Hohlfeld and M. B. Evans of the University of Wisconsin for many valuable suggestions incorporated in this work.

Swarthmore College, March 24, 1910.

INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century has been styled the century of woman. The aptness of this phrase requires no demonstration. It is evident to the most superficial observer that there have been great changes in the position accorded to woman during this period. The course of this development is clearly marked and may be retraced here in a few paragraphs.

At the turn of the century, about 1800, there seems to have been prevalent in Germany an opinion that woman's duty toward the home should take precedence of all duties toward her own individual development. The attitude of Goethe and Schiller toward Madame de Staël illustrates this well. It was felt that woman had no responsibility toward society which she could perform outside of the home and the salon. Moreover, any training apart from that necessary for a home maker would, it was thought, jeopardize feminine charm, if not entirely destroy it. Therefore the woman who demanded more knowledge or a wider influence was considered unwomanly and worthy of censure.

The romantic movement made the first step in the emancipation of woman from this rigorous rule. The mere mention of such names as Bettina, Rahel, Karoline von Günderode and Marianne von Willemer suffices to indicate woman's increasing part in the life of the times.

Young Germany began to demand liberty for all and included woman in this claim. But their doctrine of "emancipation of the flesh" aroused much opposition even among those not extremely conservative. It was while Gutzkow and Wienbarg were promulgating this doctrine that Hebbel began his literary career.

Countess Ida Hahn-Hahn by her restless, dissatisfied spirit, and Charlotte Stieglitz by her extravagant ambition for her

husband, show that woman was reaching out toward life with longing to take part in it. More typical of the attitude of Young Germany is Fanny Lewald Stahr, who, in a mild way, lived some of their principles.

After this somewhat spectacular beginning, woman progressed quietly, though many, on principle, opposed her advance and some mistaken friends retarded rather than helped her. From decade to decade, new social and economic conditions compelled her to take a more and more active part in life outside the home. She soon felt the need of training to fit her for these new duties, hence her demand for education. The gradual change in the position of woman has continued, until today she has practically the same advantages in education as man. She now finds employment in almost all professions and trades and is reaching out her hand for political power. Such marked changes in external condition cannot possibly take place without producing change in woman herself. Unquestionably, woman has evolved because of her altered ways of living until a new type has been created.

In regard to this change in woman, as always, the poets have proved themselves the sensitive instruments that indicate the tendencies of their times. He who has eyes to see may note in their works a gradual shifting of the ideal of womanhood, or, to put it more accurately, of the types of woman that the poets find worthy of delineation. From one of Schiller's or Kleist's heroines to one of Ibsen's is a far cry; and yet, marked as this contrast is, it is possible to trace its evolution by a careful study of the great dramatists of the intervening seventy years. Grillparzer, Ludwig, and Anzengruber, as well as Hebbel, contribute evidence of the gradual change in woman. Each poet has depicted woman as she has grown to be at his time.

Hebbel seems to have felt more keenly than any other German poet of the century this progressive tendency in woman. He met it with strong opposition at first and, later, with a rather reluctant sympathy and comprehension. Even his contemporaries recognized Hebbel's originality and importance in the delineation of woman.[1] Uetrecht,[2] styled him the modern

[1] In *Vaterland* N. 156, 1843; cf. B. II: 267, Apr. 43.
[2] B. VI: 76, Nov. 57.

"Frauenlob." Among later critics, all realize that such characters as Clara and Mariamne are well worth study, although there is much difference of opinion as to the poet's fidelity to nature. Indeed, any book which deals with Hebbel's dramas must discuss his heroines more or less extensively. But only four articles, so far as I know, have been written treating especially of this feature of Hebbel's work. The articles are: Dr. Emil Kreisler's *Hebbels Frauengestalten,* Wien, 1907; Dr. Karl August Pfeffer's *Die Psychologie der Charaktere in Hebbels Tragödie,* Leipzig, 1907; a chapter entitled, *Die Frau und die Ehe,* in Dr. Josef Wiehr's *Hebbel und Ibsen, in ihren Anschauungen verglichen,* Stuttgart, 1908 [3]; and Frau Hilde Engel-Mitscherlich's *Hebbel als Dichter der Frau,* Dresden, 1909.

In Dr. Kreisler's article there is practically nothing new. It is very short, only eleven pages in length. The author gives an outline of the plots of the plays and adds a few remarks intended to prove that Hebbel's heroine is usually a woman between two men.

Dr. Pfeffer has confined his investigation to the completed dramas. Moreover, in the treatment of the subject thus limited, he merely notes Hebbel's development in the delineation of character, without attempting to explain this development. In most instances, however, he amply proves the correctness of his statements. An interesting feature of his work is the discussion of similar characters created by other dramatists. By this means, he frequently throws more light on Hebbel's conception.

Dr. Wiehr rightly bases his interpretation of Hebbel's heroines on the poet's own statements in regard to them. He quotes freely from the journals and letters, but omits the lyrics which certainly add new light. He presents the poet's views, moreover, as though they were practically unchanging, and disregards, or fails to see, that Hebbel's ideas gradually developed. Dr. Wiehr does, however, note the change in Hebbel's conception of marriage after his own fortunate experience. The fact that the critic agrees with Hebbel in the main makes him a fitting interpreter of the poet's views. Unfortunately, this same fact renders him less successful in dealing with Ibsen who speaks

[3] pp. 129–173.

for the more advanced attitude taken toward woman thirty years later than Hebbel.

Frau Engel-Mitscherlich frankly states in the conclusion of her book that she has disregarded Hebbel's intention in her rather prolix descriptions of the women he has created. She is not alone in adopting this method. It seems to me, however, to be one that should be more cautiously used in dealing with the work of a poet so conscious of his own intention in every line.[4] Perfect lucidity was not his gift. The wealth of detail in his work tends to obscure his meaning. Therefore, a casual reading frequently gives a wrong impression. But after careful and repeated study of any given play, the meaning of the poet forces itself upon one. And this conception will be found, on comparison, to agree with Hebbel's intention as expressed in his journals and letters.

Frau Engel-Mitscherlich rarely touches on the more difficult problems of motive, but passes them by and dwells on the general characteristics of the seven heroines whom she treats. She describes them as sweet, gentle, all for love, and misses a certain aggressive individuality which they have in common with the poet himself and the men he has delineated.

This dissertation aims to be more complete and searching than any of the articles mentioned above. It is based on an investigation of the entire literary product of the poet and traces the gradual change in Hebbel's conception of woman, love, marriage, and motherhood, from his boyhood to the day of his death.

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[4] Walzel (p. 7 ff.) takes the view that criticisms of Hebbel which deny him somnambulistic tendencies are unjust to him. He bases his belief on statements of the poet made late in life. There is truth in his contention, and must be, unless one assumes that Hebbel was not a poet at all. But compared with other poets, he seems to me very conscious of his intention. His continual tendency to discuss the motives of his characters shows this.

WOMAN IN THE THOUGHT AND WORK OF FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

CHAPTER I.

WOMAN IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF HEBBEL

Hebbel exercised a great charm on women. Many loved him and many more were greatly attracted to him. Their actions prove that beyond possibility of doubt. Now, such things as influence and attraction are usually mutual. If women love a man, he is usually easily influenced by them, in some ways at least. Study of such a man will reveal the fact that he is continually fancying himself in love with some new type of woman. Her beauty, her personal charm, her wit, or her grace and sweetness have caught his wandering attention and held it for a time. During that period, which may be very short, she is his ideal and if he is a creative artist, she will affect his work more or less deeply. This is true of Hebbel also. There can be no doubt that Elise Lensing, Christine Enghaus, Josepha Schwarz, and Emma Schröder have helped to form in the poet's mind the women he created. Margarete Carstens, Hedwig Schulz, Emilie and Doris Voss,[1] Signorita Gagiati,[2] the Sicilian sisters,[3] and the Princess Wittgenstein have left some traces and even women like Frau Doktor Schoppe, Charlotte Rousseau and others have influenced his ideas about women and, therefore, his artistic creations. For where does man get his knowledge of woman but from those with whom he has come in contact? The influence of literature is not to be despised, but its effect is con-

[1] Kuh, *Leben* I: 160 ff.
[2] Kuh, *Leben* II: 169 f.
[3] Kuh, *Leben* II: 200 f.

servative. It tends to continue old types. Men of genius transform these types and draw all the new vital lines from life itself.

In treating of the women who have affected Hebbel's work, only a few of the most important influences will be mentioned and here the effort will be, not to discover what the women really were, but rather what the poet believed them to be. If one were striving to get at the truth about his relations with any woman, it would be necessary to delve much deeper and try to learn what manner of person she really was; but for our purpose his opinion is the only matter of importance. I shall try to adhere strictly to this principle, so as not to blur the picture I am attempting to give of Hebbel's own attitude toward women by any different and, perhaps, more just views which an unprejudiced observer could obtain.

Hebbel's method of analysis and contrast causes him to say the most striking things about woman when he compares her with man. Indeed, every man in passing judgment on women contrasts them with men, and even takes as his typical man his own conception of himself. With such a standard of measurement as that, it is to be expected that women will always make a poor showing. For, even granting that a man of genius could be absolutely just in his judgment of himself, the average woman must in many points fall below that level.

As the journal was not begun till the 23d of March, 1835, after the poet's arrival in Hamburg and as there exist but few letters written before that time, we have meager accounts of any feminine influence which was exerted upon him in Wesselburen. But he had scarcely reached Hamburg when he met Elise Lensing, who was to affect his life and work for long years. Their friendship was of rapid growth; but, as they were congenial in many ways, it proved to be enduring as well, and developed into passion which did not reach its height until the second stay in Hamburg from 1839 to 1843. It is usually difficult, even for the participants, to tell when a change in such a feeling takes place. But for convenience, we will say the period of decline began in 1843 at the time when Hebbel left for Paris, though in reality it probably began before. At any rate, one can notice during the

time in Paris and even more strikingly in Rome a rapid change from indifference to fear of being entangled in the net he had himself woven. He looked forward with dread to a return to Hamburg and Elise. Shortly after his arrival in Vienna he was so fortunate as to meet Christine Enghaus, his future wife, who made his life more peaceful and happy and gave him a new conception of woman.

This slight sketch will explain the division of his life in relation to women into four parts which can be called by the names of the cities where he was living, 1. Wesselburen, a time of no lasting attachments, 2. Hamburg and Munich, where the heart of the poet experiences no real rest though he thinks he has found a perfect and enduring affection, 3. Paris and Rome, a time of disillusionment, remorse, pessimism and fierce struggle to escape, 4. Vienna, where the fully developed and tried man finds a woman, gifted, beautiful and tactful, who helps him safely to weather the storm which was threatening wreck both to man and poet.[4]

a. Wesselburen (1813–1835)

The first woman to influence Hebbel's life was his mother and her influence was profound and lasting. At the time of her death,[5] he sums up his indebtedness to her, beginning with a tendency to violent anger followed by quick and complete forgiveness.[6] To this he adds her conscious efforts for him. Though she had not, and could not have, any real comprehension of his poetic gifts, she was willing to suffer anything rather than sacrifice him or allow him to be made a farmhand (Bauerjunge). She made it possible for him to attend school regularly, saw that he was neatly dressed,[7] and was careful to train him to be truthful.[8] Elsewhere he tells how, through always reading the even-

[4] The notes referring to the views of various critics in regard to the characters delineated are by no means exhaustive. The intention was to present a few of the more interesting views, and thus to give some idea of the variety of opinion which exists both in regard to the absolute and relative merit of the different plays from the standpoint of the delineation of woman.

[5] T. I: 1295, Sept. 38.

[6] cf. W. VIII: 82.

[7] cf. W. VIII: 97.

[8] W. VIII: 83 f.

ing blessing and the accompanying hymn to his mother, he first woke to an appreciation of the power of poetry.[9] He closes with a striking apostrophe, "Always will your gentle, gracious image remain in my soul in all the holiness of motherhood, softening, soothing, encouraging and comforting. So you will still be a mother to me beyond the grave. You will forgive me and I will never, never forget you." He did not always bear her in mind and did very little to help her, but he certainly honestly intended to.[10] He gives as a reason for his apparent neglect that the thought of her needs and his own inability to help was so painful that he tried not to think of her.[11]

His views of motherhood were affected by her unselfish devotion to him and his brother, and many of the traits in the mother in *Maria Magdalene,* and probably of Barbara in *Demetrius* have been taken from her. All three have in common their poverty and absolute devotion to their children. In *Mutter und Kind,* Magdalena's heroic willingness to suffer any privation for her child might be traced to memories of the poet's childhood when his mother was frequently obliged to watch the others eat and do without herself. It seems more probable, however, that most of the inspiration for this poem should be ascribed to Elise and Christine. Probably Velleda in *Moloch,* and Katherine in *Genoveva,* and, certainly, the mother in *Pauls merkwürdigste Nacht* show traits which suggest the poet's mother as a model.

The first love affair came to Hebbel very early. In the memories of his childhood, begun in 1842, he mentions one Emilie Voss, for whom he conceived a childish passion in his fourth year. It lasted until he was sixteen, although, "as she became older she grew homelier rather than prettier." He was cured by discovering that Emilie was not averse to the attentions of a tailor.[12] Thereupon, Hebbel transferred his affections to her younger sister Doris,[13] to whom some of his early poems are addressed. Other lyrics refer to pretty Gretchen Carstens, step-

[9] T. I: 134. Jan. 36.
[10] T. I: 156, June 36; I: 408, Oct. 36; I: 743, May 37.
[11] B. I: 312, Sept. 38.
[12] T. II: 2520, March 42, cf. W. VIII: 98 f.
[13] cf. Kuh, *Leben* I: 157 ff.

daughter of his teacher Claussen.[14] He mentions her jestingly in a letter to Theodor Mundt, dated January 1, 1832,[15] and says he has his doubts about getting a kiss from her, for in such cold weather he would not dare to touch his icy lips to hers, lest she turn to ice. And apparently he did not get the kiss, for twenty-four years later, he tells of a dream he had in the castle of Bertholdstein.[16] Although she had long been dead, she came to him again in his dream and granted him, instead of distant worship, her first kiss and a hearty one.

The name of another of these early loves has come down to us. It was Hedwig Schulz, the young actress, who was also the inspiration of a few poems, the most famous of which is *An Hedwig*. Although Wielke Elvers was his "lady" at the parties of the young people, she seems to have made little impression upon him, and to have had no influence on his literary work.[17]

In general it may be said of these numerous love affairs that they were only boy love with its spiritual, highly idealizing tendency. It is a love with all the sting of reality taken from it and is pure rapture. It was the possibility of such a feeling that was the greatest blessing to Hebbel and lifted him from his sordid surroundings into a region where the bright, playful poetry of this period developed as naturally as the early flowers in the warm sunshine.

It is chiefly from his lyrics that the young poet's views of women and love and marriage may be obtained. He sees men as the useful elements of society and as the protectors of women; women as ornaments whose duty it is not to injure men.[18]

The ideal woman is young, and a maiden. Indeed, all the heroines of this period are youthful and unmarried. Hebbel's well-known later interest in married heroines is not even indicated as yet. This ideal virgin is always practically the same

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[14] cf. Kuh, *Leben* I: 159 ff. & Werner, *Hebbel*, 20.

[15] B. I: 16.

[16] T. IV: 5519, 69 ff. Sept. 56.

[17] cf. Kuh, *Leben* I: 123 f.

[18] W. VII: 46, *Der Kranz*, Mar. 31. It has been suggested that this seems to show the influence of Schiller's *Eleusisches Fest* in its use of the words "Aehren" and "Blumen" in this symbolic meaning. In the third and fourth lines, however, one is reminded of Uhland's *Dichterfluch*.

and is well described in the poem *Die Jungfrau.*[19] She is modest yet sure of herself, proud yet mild, and spreads an angelic peace around her. The lover desires, not to embrace her, but to kneel at her feet.[20]

Pure love, as the boy-poet saw it, brings happiness into the world.[21] It has an elevating tendency, which makes the lover almost divine,[22] and endowed with superhuman powers.[23] It is the great harmonizing element in life, and can only be grasped by a noble soul.[24] It is beyond the power of human expression, but is wordlessly revealed in the heart.[25] There is nothing painful in this conception of love. It is all happiness, beauty, harmony.

The poem *Melancholie einer Stunde*[26] has been interpreted by Scheunert[27] to mean that marriage is the desecration of love. The very title indicates that it represents but one mood, and not a lasting one at that. It should also be noted that the verse which introduces the cynical portion of the poem reads: "Doch anders kann das Ding sich fügen."[28] The word to be noticed here is "kann", which implies possibility, not necessity. In a moment of depression the poet sees this ugly possibility, and realizes how crushing its effect would be. As a matter of fact, marriage did not occupy Hebbel's attention at this time. The characters he created are lovers whose union is mostly brought about by death. This depression, moreover, comes in 1833, when Heb-

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[19] W. VI: 199 f. Dec. 33.

[20] In the short stories of this period are two expressions which should be mentioned because they are at variance with the conception of woman given in the text. Meister Dietrich (*Maler,* W. VIII: 14) says that the love of woman always deceives. (cf. Scheunert H. 299). The old robber declares that woman robs man of his paradise. (*Räuberbraut,* W. VIII: 24.) It is but natural that both of these men should be cynical, and it is highly improbable that either was used as the mouthpiece of the poet, although the last line of the quotation from *Der Kranz* shows that the possibility that woman might injure men had occurred to Hebbel.

[21] W. VII: 73, *Freundschaft und Liebe,* Aug. 32 & W. V. 18, 22f.

[22] W. VII: 37, *Liebe,* Nov. 30.

[23] W. VII: 9, *Sehnsucht,* June 29.

[24] W. V: 11, 2ff & 17 f.

[25] W. VII: 115, *Frage und Antwort,* Mar. 34, cf. W. V: 9, 9ff.

[26] W. VII: 98 f. Aug. 33.

[27] H. 94 f.

[28] l. 17.

bel wrote many pessimistic poems on other subjects, which goes to show that this was a mood rather than a settled conviction.

More in harmony with the general good cheer in the poet's heart, his hopeful idealization of love and life, is the following:[29] "Domestic happiness is like the monthly rose which blossoms in every month of the year; like the vine that always remains green; like noble wine that gains in value from year to year." This is the expression of inexperience to which his own stormy, passionate nature and the great temptations of his early manhoood were to make his heart a stranger, until a real marriage brought him back at the end to a somewhat similar view of the subject.

b. Hamburg and Munich (1835-1843).

The ten years following 1835 form the period of Hebbel's life most painful to his biographer. All his sufferings previous to this, grinding poverty, humiliation, misunderstanding, seem to be purely external; but now there are added to these the more serious foes from within his own soul. Here are all too strong passions with their resulting sin and anguish. Through this terrible ordeal the poet brought much that was great and, perhaps, that noble, proud defiance of fate which appears in many of his characters was rather intensified by it. But it is more than questionable whether the benefits equaled the many disadvantages. A certain hardness and bitterness appear both in the man and in his creations, and all the rest of his life, with its happiness and comparative comfort, did not suffice to give him back that glad courage and buoyancy which are essential to the greatest works of art.

As already stated, the woman whose personality is most to be met in the works of this period is Elise Lensing; but she is not alone. Two other women, Josepha Schwarz in Munich and Emma Schröder in Hamburg, had influence on Hebbel's plays as well as on his conception of woman. All three seem to have offered little resistance to the impetuous lover. Emma's social position and Frau Doktor Schoppe's gossiping tongue together

[29] W. IX: 13, 1831.

protected her from him, but she herself seems to have been almost passive.

It is difficult to discover just how Hebbel regarded Elise Lensing. His statements in regard to her vary greatly at different times. Indeed, they are frequently contradictory. The one apparently simple question as to whether he ever loved her or not is only to be answered cautiously. Without wishing to accuse Hebbel of falsehood, one is compelled to observe that he absolutely denies ever having said and done things which we have his own written evidence to prove that he did say and do. With an impetuous disposition like his it is but natural that he should forget the old self and its doings in the new emotion. The long years of association with Elise brought many changes of mood and feeling and he, in his headlong way, gave expression to them. This alone can explain many cruel words in the letters and journal which make one shrink from the heart that could dictate them.

Such things demand, however, the exercise of a broad, generous charity for human frailty. Though the unpleasant situation was of his own making, the actions which brought it about were the inevitable result of the character of the poet. He was strong enough to conquer an adverse fate, but only strong enough through the efforts of this poor woman. When he no longer needed her, she seemed to bar his way to further progress and higher achievements. Then, as always in his life, he felt it right to ignore all claims of the past, and was absolutely incapable of seeing any justice in her demands.

If one were trying to express the total effect of Elise's life on the poet, it would be best to obtain it from some of his last statements when he could look calmly back on it all. But for our present purpose, our interest is chiefly in the Elise of the earliest time when Hebbel's affection was strongest and when traces of her are to be found in *Judith, Genoveva,* and *Maria Magdalene.* When he was most embittered toward her she was disappearing from his poetry, and the new love, Christine, was becoming the heroine of his plays as she was the queen of his heart. From this time Elise became more and more shadowy

and the type of woman she represents disappeared from his creative work.

The earliest trace of her is her signature which is found in the journal between the entries of the twentieth and the twenty-fourth of April, 1835. There is no explanation nor remark of any kind, but Hebbel had already known her for some time, for on May 9th he says that he has left her house after a stay of six weeks. "Kindness met me when I entered and I took love with me when I left. The girl is most devoted to me; if my future wife cares half so much for me, I shall be satisfied."[30] This last sentence tells the whole pitiful story. "The girl is most devoted to me." Though many later quotations might be cited which would point to love on his part, always, from first to last, she loved more than he. With the intense, almost terrible devotion of an older woman to a young man, she gave her love, the patient labor of her hands, herself, her all, in absolute faith and belief that he, the beloved, could not fail her, that for these, her most precious gifts, he must return his all. Here is a real Käthchen von Heilbronn, with a fate more in accordance with every day experience than is that of the dramatic heroine. Poor Elise! She was not a philosopher but a simple-minded girl. Experience had not taught her that a man's love grows stronger through difficulties, nor did she know the one general rule for all human hearts that love becomes deeper and purer in proportion as it gives, while the attitude of passive acceptance is almost always fatal to it.

To a student of human nature, Hebbel's few words explain it all. Had he said, "How devotedly I love the girl," we should have recognized at once the lover who is always more occupied with his own intense emotions than with the feeling he inspires. Her attitude may turn his passion to happiness or wretchedness; but when he pours forth his heart it will always be to express his own overwhelming joy or grief.

By July[31] this willing submission of a woman older and more experienced than himself to his superiority has already produced its natural result. He is beginning to regard women as his in-

[30] T. I: 31, May 35.
[31] T. I: 48, July 35.

feriors. "It is strange how women, who love in a man that which is the exact opposite of their own natures, are yet so desirous of making him like themselves; they are goddesses who deify his sins and yet never forgive these sins." About the same time,[32] he remarks that a woman lacks many spiritual possibilities, such as courage and bravery, because her body is incapable of them. In September[33] he thinks that women are too remote from man to understand him and that their influence is baneful. As critics of poetry they are rarely inspiring. This is probably not directed against Elise, however, for it was Frau Schoppe whose efforts at criticism irritated him at this time. Elise was a sympathetic listener rather than a helpful critic of his literary productions. And yet her beautiful, unselfish tenderness and devotion were not unnoticed, for he writes, "Woman gives birth to man not once but twice. Also the spiritual second birth through love of man (durch die Humanität) is her work."[34]

In the spring of 1836, armed with both spiritual and material aid from the faithful Elise, Hebbel started on his search after knowledge in Heidelberg and Munich. During this separation he wrote as often as he could afford it and she remained his dearest friend. As he writes from Heidelberg,[35] "You are not the first in beauty and youth, but in your boundless love and self-surrender you are the only woman on earth who can still unite me with happiness and joy." By September he seems to be thinking of his relations with Elise and to plan to keep her from loving him too much. Like Kleist,[36] he thinks that man is concerned with the world and life and woman only with man. He should be truthful toward her and she discreet toward him. Then, in continuance of a thought he had expressed shortly before,[37] "Women desire no relations but eternal ones," he says, "If it is impossible for a man to change the flower chain of the moment which he has allowed to be placed around him for the anchor chain of eternity, let him do something unseemly; if she is a real

[32] T. I: 76, July, 35.
[33] B. I: 36, Sept. 35.
[34] T. I: 142, Jan. 36.
[35] B. I. 52, April 36.
[36] T. I: 343, Sept. 36.
[37] T. I: 162, June 36.

woman, this seems to her ignoble and cures her while it wounds." "so thue er das Ungeziemende; das wirkt auf sie, wenn sie echtes Weib ist, wie das Unedle und heilt sie, indem es sie verwundet."

A few weeks after his arrival in Munich Hebbel chanced upon the daughter of a cabinet maker, Josepha Schwarz. She interested and entertained him and soon appears in the journal even more than Elise. She is first mentioned on October 19, 1836.[38] By December she is "dearest, most precious, Beppi."[39] She is often quoted and her dreams are reported with considerable frequency. He calls her "the all-enduring Josepha," ("die Alles duldende Josephe,")[40] and speaks of her kindly heart, [41] and refers once to the unhappy past of the girl, "erst musst Du an den gerathen und nun an mich", and how he, at first, could not forgive her. One feels at once the resemblance to the story of *Maria Magdalene.*[42] Later he pretended to love some one else to test her fidelity, but she came through it triumphantly.[43]

Hebbel seems to have thought of her as a sweet, lovable, frail creature whose childish dreams and fancies were worth studying for their naiveté,[44] and of her love as a purely animal instinct.[45] Though he was harsh to the poor child,[46] and accepted everything from her with extreme composure, even to the extent of allowing her to carry his satchel through the streets of Munich for him,[47] he appears to have had some real affection for her, for he speaks of money he has promised her as his "holiest debt,"[48] and says they parted with "endless tears."[49] Not only her story but also some of the traits of her character as he saw it appear in *Maria Magdalene.* Clara's

[38] T. I: 423.
[39] T. I: 460.
[40] T. I: 576, Jan. 37.
[41] T. I: 582, Jan. 37; 754, May 37; 1458, Jan. 39.
[42] T. I: 582, Jan. 37.
[43] T. I: 673, April 37.
[44] T. I: 1254, July 38.
[45] T. I: 745 May 37.
[46] T. I: 574, Jan. 37; 576, Jan. 37.
[47] T. II: 2654, 4f. Mar. 39.
[48] T. I: 1178, June 38.
[49] T. II: 2654, 10f. Mar. 39.

longing for the comfort of Catholicism, her faith in dreams, and the almost instinctive way in which she seeks death, although for a different reason, seem to show Beppi's influence.[50]

In the meantime, the friendship with Elise was not abandoned. During the stay in Munich Hebbel wrote letters to her, which show that he gave her much of the thought that lay nearest his heart. Here and there are tender and beautiful expressions of affection. Would it not be hard to believe that a man was incapable of enduring love when he could write in all sincerity, "All that is holiest and truest, all the respect and love in my heart, is bestowed upon you, is yours forever?" Or "What is mine is yours also?"[51] What a short eternity of love it was! Only a few months later one cannot but wonder if he was already thinking of Elise when he wrote, "There are cases where it is a sin to fulfill one's duty."[52] And the next year he tells her plainly that he cannot return her love because his heart is bankrupt.[53]

From the time of his association with Beppi, this more sensuous, less intellectual type of girl influenced the poet, and again lowered his conception of woman. Picture the situation. The central figure is a young man, attractive to women, passionate, gifted and extremely poor. He feels that there is but one thing for him in life, and that is the cultivation of his talent. The world does not believe in him, and he has no means to prepare himself for his work nor the kind of ability that enables one to earn sufficient money for an education by his own efforts. His personal charm has already subjected two women to him. His passionate nature makes him forget that he is robbing them not only of their peace of mind, but also of their good name, and from each he accepts everything she has. The one gives him money, clothes and all that she can in the way of intellectual stimulus, while the other waits on him like a faithful little slave, amuses him and listens to his developing thoughts which she probably cannot understand; but that matters little

[50] B. I: 143, Jan. 37.
[51] B. I: 165, Feb. 37 cf. Bastier, 47f.
[52] T. I: 805, July 37.
[53] B. I: 298, Sept. 38.

to a man with something to say. His object in talking is to render his thoughts clear to himself. The picture is not an heroic one for the poet, and one's heart must ache for the two gentle, foolish, loving women, quivering sacrifices on the altar of literature. The poet repays all this sacrifice by a serene, condescending scorn of women. He is of the opinion that a man loses everything or nothing, friendship with the friend and love with the loved one; but a woman feels both pain and happiness only on a small scale.[54] And this is well, he thinks, because her sensations may be compared to the letting of blood; she loses by intensified feelings while a man gains. She is like the grape vine which must not bleed if it is to produce fruit.[55]

In general Hebbel now thinks that woman belongs in the most limited and narrow circle.[56] He denies her even a true religion, and says she could get along without a heaven and would never have discovered one if left to herself. For her heaven resembles a rare dessert, "einem ausgesuchten Nachtisch." If she wants to go to heaven, it is so as not to be inferior to man, to go where he goes.[57] She is the purveyor (Marketenderin) to the moment and not the sun-dial of eternity. She knows no goal, but she knows the starting point and never misses an inn where one can get refreshment. This is, of course, a figurative way of saying that woman is the practical realist of this life. As he puts it later, she knows well how to use in the kitchen what man has discovered in the stars. This, he tells us, is his reason for asserting that woman should be emancipated, not by society, but by man. From the fact that society has emancipated her, it follows that the women of the times bear precisely the same relation to immorality that woman should bear to morality. It seems evident that Hebbel here had the views of Young Germany in mind.

But he still believes in feminine purity, and thinks he might

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[54] T. I: 699, Apr. 37.

[55] B. I: 172, Jan. 37.

[56] cf. T. I: 366, Sept. 36.

[57] B. I: 171, Feb. 37 and T. I: 628, Feb. 37. cf. T. I: 502, Dec. 36: Die Weiber kennen keinen Gott, als den Gott der Liebe, und kein Sacrament, als das Sacrament der Ehe. Bastier (69) says that Hebbel has written and rewritten the tragic *Ecole des Femmes*. In this way he refers to the cynical tone of some of Hebbel's expressions about woman.

yet be saved by a pure woman.[58] This and the surprising sentence written in 1839 are the only statements showing respect for women which Hebbel makes during the time in Munich. He writes,[59] "In woman there is an infinite perfectibility, which, up to this time, hemmed and held back by social relations, will, perhaps, by a strong, free and independent development give humanity entirely new tendencies." This sentence is rather difficult to explain. It does not seem to fit in at all with Hebbel's theories of the place of woman and occurs in the midst of a rather sensuous description of the women of Munich. Perhaps, in the light of later developments, one is now inclined to read into the sentence thoughts which were far from the author's intention. But it certainly suggests ideas that seem to lead to a Nora who asks just that, a "strong, free, independent development."

As seems but natural when one considers the state of Hebbel's heart and conscience at this time, the relations of love and marriage occupy his thoughts to a great extent. His statements about love are interesting in that one can notice three distinct tendencies in his way of looking at it. He recalls and idealizes the early days of his purely spiritual love in Wesselburen, philosophizes on his relation to Elise and never forgets the more physical passion awakened by Beppi.

There are many quotable general statements about love which can hardly be classified under any of the three heads given, and yet are interesting in that they give an idea of the amount of thought Hebbel was putting on the subject. "If you love truly, you must be loved in return."[60] "When lovers promise to think of each other, they really promise that they will breathe."[61] "Love is Greek fire which burns best in water."[62] "Love is the only fire which, once extinguished, may never be blown to life again; the magnet that cannot hold fast the object it has attracted, is not the right one."[63]

[58] T. I: 583, Jan. 37.
[59] W. IX: 414 f. 1839.
[60] T. I: 1180, June 38.
[61] T. I: 1406, Dec. 38.
[62] T. I: 1734, Oct. 39, cf. T. III: 4062, Mar. 47 & W. VI: 377, *Das griechische Feuer*, Mar. 51.
[63] W. X: 390, 1839.

When he thinks of Wesselburen, he writes, "The first mad love, though it usually passes without leaving any trace and is accompanied by such ridiculous actions, is still, perhaps, the most earnest of one's life, as nothing else so completely exerts every energy of man.[64] Again he says, "Oh, how a man loves when between him and what he loves impossibility stands."[65] He continues, "I am convinced that every one, except the hero and the artist could experience Werther's Leiden." Another memory of early years is, "The first love is the consecrated wafer in which all that is happy is concealed."[66]

His feeling for Elise he calls friendship, which he defines as "the only attractive power which binds man to man." Love "is either the flame-like precursor of this pure, imperishable Vesta glow or the swiftly kindled and swiftly extinguished breath of impure senses."[67] Perhaps he is also thinking of her when he writes, "Two who once loved each other; one has grown cold, the other still loves. A terrible relation when the cold one is not lacking in nobility."[68]

Beppi's kind of love receives recognition when he says, "Sensuousness: symbol of insatiable spiritual needs,"[69] and "Certainly the senses are the keyboard of the spirit."[70] And again he describes the women of Munich as sensuous, but not with the ugly sensuality of north Germany which wants to appear something different, as though it loathes nothing more than itself. "This sensuousness is of a better kind. It has its roots in the sweet mystery of love; it knows it has a right to existence; in addition, there is the dark, star-covered background of Catholicism. It is charming in a girl when she is a Catholic, and nevertheless the lost heretic feeds upon her lips."[71]

On the subject of marriage there is no wavering. He sees it in only one light and feels it to be bondage, not union. "In

[64] T. I: 1112, May 38.
[65] T. I: 1423, June 39 cf. T. I: 1734, Oct. 39.
[66] T. I: 1592, May 39.
[67] B. I: 136, and T. I: 511, Dec. 36.
[68] T. I: 1610, May 39.
[69] T. I: 907, Oct. 37.
[70] T. I: 1110, May 38, cf. T. I: 145, Jan. 36. Passion commits no sin only coldness.
[71] W. IX: 414, 1839.

marriage there is something petrifying; a wife is always the Medusa or death angel for the life and riches of a man. Youth and beauty are no recompense."[72] "To marry! Of all terrible things it is to me the most terrible. I shall certainly never bring myself to it, for it is like bottling heaven."[73] "It is a civil, physical, and in an infinite number of cases, a spiritual necessity.[74] It gives limit to the individual and safety to the whole."[75] These three statements seem to contradict each other, but they do not necessarily do so, and may be interpreted as follows:—A permanent union with a woman must always be hampering to a man. This is the natural inference from Hebbel's previously expounded belief in the essential inferiority of woman. But from considerations of the state, man's physical make-up, and often from his spiritual weakness, this permanence becomes a necessity for the common man. For the man of genius, however, this necessity does not exist and the thought of marriage causes horror.

Hebbel also thinks that he could commit suicide by believing for a short time, with Gutzkow and Wienbarg, in the "Emancipation der Ehe."[76] He must mean by this that he could not endure the thought of freeing women from the bonds and limitations set by society; but he evidently thinks that some men, at least, should not be bound, for he himself never intends to marry,[77] and he thinks that though humanity in general is subject to necessity, the individual may escape it if he can win his liberation by sacrifice. Therein lies his freedom.[78] Just what he is to sacrifice he does not mention. The view of Young Germany went beyond Hebbel and gave the same freedom to woman as to man. With this he had no sympathy whatever, as is shown by his attitude of reluctant forgiveness toward poor little Beppi because he himself was the second, instead of the first man she had been unable to resist.

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[72] B. I: 202, Mar. 37.
[73] B. I: 121, Mar. 36.
[74] B. I: 131 & T. I: 509, Dec. 36.
[75] T. I: 1478, Feb. 39.
[76] T. I: 593, Jan. 37.
[77] B. I: 208 f. Mar. 37.
[78] T. I: 509, Dec. 36.

At Hebbel's return to Hamburg, in the spring of 1839, his relation with Elise became more intimate than ever before. His feeling seems also to have come nearer to that of a true lover than previously. In September the journal contains the following sentence, "Elise. How splendidly nature has ordained that the highest happiness of man blooms on a maiden's lip."[79]

On the fifteenth of October[80] comes a burst of gratitude to Elise to whom he owes all that he is because he has been living on her means since he left for Heidelberg. He mentions also her endurance of his whims and her sacrifice in nursing him. She has saved him from despair by her friendship.[81] He speaks of her loving thought for him at Christmas,[82] and closes the year with penitence for the suffering he has caused her and a hope that he may earn enough to free her from her painful position.[83] Toward the end of the next month he did pay her some money, which was not earned, however, but was given by Charlotte Rousseau,[84] and the greater debt he evidently had not the strength to pay, for he quotes from Elise, "Do not always be so hard toward me; I fear I might stop loving you."[85] He comments that she said it with great anxiety.

During Elise's illness of March 1840, Hebbel seems nearly crazed with fear lest he lose her; he says, "She is the last person who makes the world endurable to me, and I owe her so very, very much. It is terrible that people can be so closely bound together and yet die alone.[86] Never in the world can I find another woman like her."[87] When she felt able she left Hamburg and tried to regain her strength.

During Elise's absence he met a beautiful girl, the daughter of a senator. There are only a few references to Emma Schröder, but they are of a nature so passionate, so penetrated with regret, that it is necessary to mention her in a list of women who

[79] T. I: 1646, Sept. 39.
[80] T. I: 1700.
[81] T. I: 1701, 43, Oct. 39.
[82] T. I: 1845, 3, Dec. 39.
[83] T. I: 1865, 111, Dec. 39.
[84] T. II: 1893, Jan. 40.
[85] T. II: 1900, Jan. 40.
[86] T. II: 1933, Mar. 40.
[87] T. II: 1936, Mar. 40.

came close to Hebbel. On the twentieth of July, 1840, he speaks with rapture of a rose which the "lovely girl" gave him, and says he is intoxicated with its perfume.[88] On the twenty-fifth he writes to Elise of his passion and says he might have kissed Emma and does not know why he did not.[89] And on the twenty-seventh, he speaks of a note she sent him which so excited him that he could not sleep till late at night. He is glad that he is still capable of feeling so intensely.[90] By March of the next year he is calmer for he speaks of her as an auditor of his *Genoveva,* and is interested in the way it affects her principally because of his beloved play.[91] Lastly, on the twenty-ninth of August, 1843, he mentions having seen her, calls her the most remarkable girl he ever knew, and blames Frau Schoppe for slandering her and thus shutting him out from the "greatest happiness in the world."[92]

During the height of this passion Hebbel so far forgot himself as to write Elise the full account of the affair.[93] He tells in burning words of his passion for Emma Schröder, and speaks of his relation to Elise as "ein Verhältnis" together with the one to Beppi. When one remembers that his oldest son Max was born less than four months later, one is shocked at his needless cruelty. It is but fair to the poet to say that he apologizes in the next letter,[94] and on the third of September, the day after Elise's departure, he writes of her with love, admiration, and passionate self-reproach.[95] "How far you stand above me, you, who are all love; you, in whom I have never discovered a trace of the curse of our race, egotism, never, even as much as is necessary to maintain oneself in this base and hostile world."

From this time till he left Hamburg never to return for any length of time, one can readily see how the relation is growing ever worse and worse. Deeply felt praise of Elise alternates with bitterest blame for himself that he can not control his own harsh, easily irritated nature. He mentions Elise as a woman

[88] T. II: 2045.
[89] B. II: 91
[90] T. II: 2047.
[91] T. II: 2304
[92] T. II: 2769
[93] B. II: 90. July 40.
[94] B. II: 95 f. Sept. 40.
[95] T. II: 2098, Sept. 40.

with ability to write,[96] speaks again and again of her noble nature as an undeserved gift to him from above, yet plainly says that a saintlike character arouses fury as often as it compels worship.[97] This is well illustrated by Golo in *Genoveva.*

While in Copenhagen Hebbel wrote Elise many loving letters and in his journal he refers to the joyless existence to which she is condemned because of her love for him.[98] In the letters he speaks of her deeply poetic soul,[99] and says he is willing to use her spiritual gems because she is part of himself, there is no boundary between them. He calls her his "greatest treasure, his dearest jewel" and adds, "you alone have my love, my whole love."[100] Such sentences as these make later statements that he had never led her to hope for more than he had already given her, at least questionable.

The two problems in relation to woman which were of most importance in the poet's life during this second stay in Hamburg were marriage and motherhood. Elise and little Max were a daily study to him, and he could not forget his duty toward them, argue as he might against the institution of marriage.

Nowhere does Hebbel more definitely express his view of woman's mission in the world than in the words of Judith which have so frequently been quoted, "A woman is nothing, only through man can she become something; she can become a mother through him. The child she bears is the only thanks she can offer nature for her existence."[1] Mother-love is the most powerful feeling a woman can know. Even her husband she can only love as much as he loves her child.[2]

Hebbel's attention was also directed to the relative attitude of man and woman toward the world, and in three different places he has expressed much the same view. "The nature of woman is limitation, restriction, therefore she must strive toward the illimitable; the nature of a man is the illimitable, therefore he

[96] T. II: 2353, June 41; B. II: 211, Feb. 43.
[97] T. I: 1865, 131, Dec. 39.
[98] T. II: 2617, Nov. 42.
[99] B. II: 211, Feb. 43.
[100] B. II: 236, Mar. 43.
[1] W. I: 19; 11ff. Cf. 67, 22f.
[2] T. II: 2052, July, 40; cf. T. II: 2090, Aug. 40; 2110, Sept. 40; 2071, Aug. 40: W. I: 76ff.

must seek to limit himself.[3] "She (woman) moulds from herself what he (man) in vain seeks to mould from the material of external life; therefore, she is subject to herself alone, he to every element that surrounds him."[4]

In the first two strophes of the poem *Mann und Weib*,[5] Hebbel seems to contrast woman's naive acceptance of life, with man's conscious efforts to modify it. In the third and fourth strophes, he shows that woman clings to happiness and peace and shrinks from risking them, whereas man avoids happiness as a hampering element and seeks new truth even at the expense of the joy of life. This passive quality which the poet ascribes to woman in saying that she avoids moulding the material of life into new forms, makes her socially significant only through her relation to man. Even the maiden exists only to lose her virginity. "A maiden is a foolish being who trembles before her own dreams, because a dream can mortally wound her, and yet she lives on the hope of not always remaining a maiden. For her there is no greater moment than the one in which she ceases to be a maiden, and every ebullition of passion which she has formerly withstood, every sigh which she has stifled, increases the value of the sacrifice which she has to bring at that moment."[6] With this one might compare, "The death of innocence, love, is even more beautiful than innocence itself,"[7] and the statement that to take the vow of chastity is to set a limit to nature in its holiest tendencies,[8] though this last probably applies both to man and woman. Such a conception of virginity makes woman a creature of sex to a much greater extent than man. For Hebbel, at this period of his life at least, that was the case. The maiden exists only that she may become a wife. And this again is only a stepping stone to woman's chief, nay, her only function, motherhood.[9]

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[3] T. II: 2309, Mar. 41.
[4] W. I: 94, 156 ff.
[5] W. VI: 321, 1842.
[6] W. I: 669, 1ff.
[7] T. II: 2525, Apr. 42; cf. W. VI: 265, 1842.
[8] T. II. 2084, Aug. 40, cf. Wiehr, 151.
[9] In a letter to the Countess J. Redern, where the poet might be pardoned for a little flattery, Hebbel remarks (B. II: 127, Nov. 43), "In *Genoveva* I have tried to do honor to the nature of woman, which I place far above that of

General statements about love are comparatively rare at this time, but there are a few, all of which clearly show the poet's inner life. "Love in most men means the filling of their own emptiness with borrowed matter."[10] "The man who has never loved can easily fancy he always loves."[11] "Love is so beautiful because it protects from self love,"[12] and "Only through love can a man be freed from himself."[13]

The union of two filled with a pure love will reveal the depths of nature. What lies unformed in the spirit of the man and scarcely felt [notice the difference] in the bosom of the woman will mingle.[14] Hebbel intends to imply no lack in the woman, simply that she is unconscious of what is in her heart. The advice to a noble woman to substitute complete self-revelation for complete self-surrender is interesting in that it indicates that the poet's ideal of noble womanhood prefers to yield her individuality to her lover. He tells her, however, that she will be unable to do as she wishes, because such a sacrifice can never be complete.[15]

As in the previous period, when love reaches its perfect culmination, death follows.[16] Golo's definition of love expresses somewhat the same thought:

"Du [Liebe] bist's, die diese kalte spröde Welt
Durchflammen, schmelzen und verzehren soll!
Du bist nicht Leben, du bist Tod, ja Tod!
Du bist des Todes schönste, höchste Form,
Die einzige, die giebt, indem sie nimmt."[17]

It will be noticed, however, that this last expression has a ter-

man." It is perfectly evident from all the quotations in the text that this was true only from the standpoint of the heart. He never considered woman on a level with man intellectually, and that he does not even think her purer than man is shown by another quotation in regard to Golo. (T. I: 1475, 63, Feb. 39). "Moreover it is just the noblest seducer who least can believe in the purity of a cold woman. Why should she stand higher than he, and if she must fall for some one, why not for him?"

[10] T. II: 2027, May 40.

[11] T. II: 2059, July 40.

[12] T. II: 2100, Sept. 40.

[13] T. II: 2115, Sept. 40; cf. W. VI: 212, *Neue Liebe,* July 41.

[14] W. VI: 322, *Das Heiligste,* 1842.

[15] W. VI: 317, *An eine edle Liebende,* 1842.

[16] W. VI: 214, 1843.

[17] W. I: 99, 298 ff. cf. W. I: 118, 711 f. & 116, 642 ff.

rible reality about it, which it has obtained because it is no longer mere literary tradition enlivened by a poet's fancy, but has become vital to Hebbel through his deeper experience in life and love.

He was certainly thinking of the value of even a fleeting love as experienced in the cases of Elise, Beppi and Emma when he wrote that we should no more despise it because it does not last long, than we should consider the water of baptism of little value because it soon dries.[18]

The last quotation takes us apparently far away from love to something that looks rather like hate. But the creator of Judith and Holofernes, Golo and Genoveva, has a strong sense of the natural antagonism between men and women. He finds in love the means for overcoming this "natural enmity" as he expressed it.[19]

In Munich Hebbel had rebelled against marriage. In Hamburg he transfers his hatred from the institution to the ceremony. "The formal conclusion of a marriage is either superfluous or wicked."[20] "Love which is sure of itself scorns the form and prefers to be misunderstood rather than inconsistent."[21] In 1842, he begins to call such a relation a "Gewissens-Ehe."[22] This idea seems to please him, for he often refers to such a marriage as one that should be recognized as justifiable. But just before leaving Hamburg, never to return to his life with Elise, he writes that artistic natures rebel against civil relations such as marriage because the "bloom of it is destroyed by being forced to last longer than it usually can."[23] These quotations seem to point to a brief period when Hebbel believed he loved Elise and that their relation would be a lasting one, although any such illusion was destroyed when he left her.

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[18] T. II: 2773, Aug. 43.
[19] T. II: 2101, Sept. 40.
[20] T. II: 1967, Apr. 40.
[21] T. II: 2175, Oct. 40.
[22] T. II: 2597, Oct. 42.
[23] T. II: 2772, Aug. 43.

c. Paris and Italy (1843–1845).

When the poet received his pension from the king of Denmark he set off for Paris with the hope of widening his mental horizon. Here he found himself a stranger in a strange land. Lonely, poor, not gifted as a linguist, what more natural than that he should longingly recall the pleasant side of his life with Elise? Not real reawakening love but homesickness dictated such passages as, "I need family life, I must have a breast on which I can rest my weary, distracted head, I must be with you."[24] The death of Max added to Hebbel's loneliness bitter self-accusations. He feared lest Elise die in her grief before he could do her the justice of giving her his name.[25] Therefore he quite naturally mistook his own feelings and overestimated his strength. When he eagerly offered to marry Elise and gave her the choice as to whether it should be in Germany or France,[26] he overlooked the fact that he was not the man who could marry a woman because he owed it to her. He did realize this two weeks later and wrote that he had been too hasty.[27]

By December he was able to philosophize on the difference between man and woman in grief and to conclude that it is because woman has no feeling for the sufferings of existence as a whole, that she can feel so intensely the anguish of the individual.[28] A true woman, the poet still thinks, feels that she is nothing in herself, and only something in her relation to husband and child.[29]

During the next year, the gradual waning of his tenderness is evident. He accepts the birth of his second son rather calmly and begins to put off and explain away the necessity of mar-

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[24] B. II: 288, Sept. 43.
[25] T. II: 2805, 90f. Oct. 43.
[26] B. II: 303 ff. Oct. 43.
[27] B. II: 320 ff. Nov. 43.
[28] B. II: 339, Dec. 43.
In this connection, the poem, *Das abgeschiedene Kind an seine Mutter* (W. VI: 294 ff. Dec. 43) should be mentioned. This philosophical poem is certainly one of the strangest messages ever sent by the father of a child to the grief stricken mother. There is no tenderness in it, nothing but cool speculation.
[29] T. I: 2927, Dec. 43. Compare p. 29 for similar ideas expressed by Hebbel during the previous period.

riage. By the end of the year he looks forward with dread to the thought of being bound and feels that it would make him unhappy and her not happy. "Elise is the best woman on earth, the best heart, the purest soul, but she loves a man who cannot return her love. Love wishes to possess and the man who does not love cannot give himself, but at most sacrifice himself."[30] By February, 1845, he betrays the amount of thought he is putting on the subject by the sentence, "Shake off everything that limits your development, even if it be a person who loves you, for no one can be helped by what destroys you."[31]

In May he assures her that they must always keep together and says that some of the best parts of *Judith, Genoveva* and *Maria Magdalene* belong to her.[32] But in July he writes, "To marry without loving is to commit follies by dictate of reason."[33]

From this time on comes the long painful story of doubt of her truthfulness, of bitterness and hard words. Some of it, probably the worst, Hebbel's friend, Felix Bamberg, saw fit to destroy. This may have been a loss to the scientific study of Hebbel's character, but to judge from what is left, its destruction cannot be regretted. We should have known what hard things a desperate man can say, but they would not necessarily have been true, even if not intentionally false. As was said before, the details of the story are of minor interest to us, for Elise almost disappears from the poet's work after the appearance of *Maria Magdalene.* The agony of their conflict is important chiefly because of the pessimistic note toward woman it induced in the literary productions of the period.

The trip to Paris and Rome, though it at first produced *Maria Magdalene* and seemed to promise well, is really the period in Hebbel's life the most barren of production. He composed lyrics, made plans and wrote part of *Moloch,* but was unable to complete anything of importance, and this state of affairs went from bad to worse. Italy did really less for him than Paris. The unpleasant conditions in his heart life probably had

[30] T. II: 3277, Dec. 44.
[31] T. III: 3425. Feb. 45.
[32] B. III: 231, May 45.
[33] T. III: 3482, July 45.

much to do with this. After nine years of devotion and endurance of her painful situation, Elise lost patience. She felt that Hebbel should keep the promise of marriage he had made, and he was the more irritated because there was justice in her claim. But whatever there was of passion in the relation was now dead. Elise had neither grown younger nor more beautiful and agreeable from the years of suffering and sacrifice, and, to put it bluntly, Hebbel was tired of her. This could not be concealed either by the denial of facts or by angry reproaches.

The feeling of the poet toward the one woman dearest to him was bound to make him cynical. His ideal woman at this time was all self-surrender and he had believed that Elise possessed this characteristic preeminently. Hence, when he found her capable of demanding something for herself which he did not wish to give, he lost faith in all womankind.

At this time he made a number of ugly, pessimistic remarks about women, of which the following will serve as examples: "Women make it their purpose in life to be young."[34] "Every maiden is a widow; it is only a question how often."[35] "A beautiful girl is murdered. Another girl aids the murderers and sticks her tongue out at the one who is dying."[36] "(Women) always believe that they are deprived of as much as a sister woman possesses more than they."[37] "The most insignificant woman can arrange an intrigue better than the cleverest man. The reason is that it is nature in her and talent in him."[38] "Women can endure suffering as children do and live in the past, whereas men can live only in the future."[39] "The condition of existence for a woman is the possession of the man she loves."[40]

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[34] T. III: 3325, Feb. 45, cf. T. III: 4729, Sept. 50, "Eine Frau wird älter, aber nicht alt." This has a light humorous turn lacking in the one written in 1845.

[35] T. III: 3332, Feb. 45. That Hebbel himself later felt this to be cynical, he proves by putting it into the mouth of Edmund in *Die Schauspielerin* (W. V: 177.)

[36] T. III: 3346, Feb. 45.

[37] T. II: 3104, Apr. 44.

[38] T. II: 2980, Jan. 44, cf. *Nathan der Weise* III: 4, end.

[39] T. III: 3441, Apr. 45.

[40] B. III: 204 f. Feb. 45.

The poem, *Auf ein erröthendes junges Mädchen, das ich im Louvre sah*[41] expresses clearly Hebbel's view of woman at this period of his development. His glances awake her from childhood. He steals as his right the first kiss that a man has ever taken from her lips. He calls it the "fruit of maidenhood" and hopes that this kiss will "complete his happiness," that she will discover herself through it and become a woman on his breast. Thus woman changes from child to maiden, from maiden to woman primarily through her physical relations with man. There is no indication in the poem that there is any spiritual relation between the poet and the blushing girl.[42]

Love and marriage are also viewed with pessimistic eyes. Love is only a form of egotism,[43] and when it gives its all it becomes bankrupt.[44] Marriage is a matter requiring resolution, like going to war or rescuing some one from a burning house.[45] From the woman's standpoint, he remarks that it is the privilege of youth and beauty to get a husband.[46]

d. Vienna (1845–1863)

It was a gloomy disappointed man who, in October, 1845, made the journey from Rome to Vienna.[47] He was leaving beautiful Italy and wandering toward the winter. Although he had written some lyrics and had planned a few plays, his literary production was at its lowest ebb in quality and quantity. Doubt of himself as a poet must have assailed him, and his position as a man was anything but pleasant. Before him was a reunion with Elise, and he plainly foresaw that the relation would be

[41] W. VI: 213 f. Jan. 44.

[42] It has been suggested to me that the arrangement of this poem between two others more spiritual in nature should be taken into consideration. This is quite true if one were making a final estimate of the views of the developed poet. But in such an investigation as this, where the whole point lies in the historical development, the question is rather when it was written than how the poet chose finally to modify the impression it makes by its position in his collected poems.

[43] B. III: 204 f. Feb. 45.

[44] T. II: 3232, Sept. 44.

[45] B. III: 262, July 45.

[46] B. III: 273, Oct. 45.

[47] Arrived, November 4, 1845.

almost unendurable to both after the bitter letters which had passed between them.

But Vienna gave the poet more than he dared to hope. First it greeted him with his mother-tongue, an important thing for Hebbel, who was a poor linguist. It was a great and enlightened capital where he could breathe freely. The cultivated people were rather inclined to lionize the author of *Judith* and *Maria Magdalene* and, most important of all, he met the woman who meant more to him than any other, his future wife, Christine Enghaus. "I had seen but three times this very beautiful girl whose noble heart is expressed in every glance, every word, when the whole essence of life, which love alone conjures up, again came to me."[48]

But with love came a struggle, though not the one we would naturally expect. He considered himself free to abandon Elise and even to marry some one else. No, it was purely a struggle within himself. He says he thought of running away because the new love laid a bitter duty upon him, a duty which he felt himself as little able to meet as the secretary in *Maria Magdalene*. He continues, "Do you know why I did not flee? Because I am the author of this drama, because I could not withdraw from the test which fate laid upon me without declaring my play, and with it my whole poetry, for base hypocrisy, because I was ashamed to have made moral demands in a picture of life, which it was too hard for me myself to fulfil."[48] So he remained, accepted his "bitter duty" and was rewarded by a happy close to his life. Christine's salary was sufficient to support them quite comfortably and when Hebbel began to earn a little himself, they were able to live better and also to repay some of the financial debt to Elise.

Toward Christine there is no change in feeling except that he grows to love her more and more deeply and truly.[49] She is to him all that a woman should be, beautiful, gifted, noble, unselfish, angelic in nature.[50] One quotation and a characteristic one is enough to show what he thought of her. "What a

[48] B. III: 339 f. June, 46; cf. Bastier, (34, 47), who takes the view that the poet was most unhappy for a long time after his marriage.

[49] cf. B. VI: 117, Mar. 58.

[50] T. III: 3644, June 46.

contrast there is between my wife and the other women of the theatre! And not them alone! Whenever I see her among other women, I love her better. A purity of heart, an angelic kindness without an equal."[51] What more natural than that she should be the heroine of all his later plays? She seems to have been in his mind when he created Agnes, Mariamne, Rhodope, Kriemhild and Brunhild. With her gifts and the independence of thought and bearing which accompanied them, she enlightened Hebbel and elevated his ideal of womanhood. Though we understand Judith and recognize in her the new attitude of woman, we are continually impressed with Hebbel's criticism of her action. He feels that in taking an initiative, even by divine command, she sins against the laws which govern her sex and so must come to grief. The later heroines, after Christine's influence began, have the poet's sympathy in their struggles for recognition.

After 1846, women are not only, as formerly, the real center of his plays, but they are personalities to be dealt with. And this change is to be ascribed almost entirely to the character of Christine Enghaus. Here was no ignorant Beppi, no idolizing Elise, who from their humble spheres accepted the condescending affection of the poet as a great boon, but a woman with a recognized position as an actress, herself accustomed to adoration from others, a personage whom royalty itself did not disdain to receive and admire. He simply could not fail to respect her and, with one woman who forced his esteem as well as his love, the entire sex rose in Hebbel's eyes. It is but natural, and his writings prove it beyond possibility of doubt. "No woman has ever made an impression upon me by depth of intellect, but more than one has by depth of emotional nature. In the heart lies the strength of the sex, although the strength of certain individuals may indeed lie in the intellect. There is nothing more charming to see than a woman's heart illumined by a woman's intellect."[52] This statement made in the journal in 1846 is the expression of Hebbel's last view of woman. One feels that this is a picture of his wife as she ap-

[51] T. III: 4124, Mar. 47.
[52] T. III: 3635, June 46.

peared to him. He never was willing to consider her or any other woman as his intellectual peer but he did learn to have some respect for intellect in a woman, though he still thought the heart her point of greatest strength. In December of the same year,[53] he speaks of being moved by each glimpse into the nature of woman, and expresses the poetic thought that Adam first saw himself in the mirror of Eve's eyes, "so dasz physisch geschah, was psychisch immer geschieht."[54]

That his ideas of the essentials of womanliness did not alter greatly, is seen in the illustration he uses to show that his wife had not cultivated her talents at the expense of her womanliness. "What a housewife and mother,"[55] he exclaims. For woman as the romantic school portrayed her, Hebbel had no sympathy. He speaks sarcastically of the ethereal ladies, too frail for eating and drinking, for cradle and hearth, but strong in other things.[56] A quotation from Schopenhauer,[57] shows that Gretchen and Käthchen are still his ideals. He says that such women torment their husbands with the jealousy which they feel, while women of a different type torment them with the jealousy they arouse and even try to arouse with heartless coquetry.[58] Indeed, Hagen's description of an ideal wife is somewhat of an exaggeration of Hebbel's own:

> "Wer wünschte sich denn nicht
> Ein Weib, wie sie, wer mögte nicht ein Weib,
> Das blind für Alles ist, so lang man lebt,
> Und wenn man stirbt, noch mit der Erde hadert,
> Weil sie nicht stralt und leuchtet, wo man liegt?"[59]

In spite of all she lacks, Hebbel regards woman in her bloom as the most ideal phenomenon in nature;[60] she is "die Wiederholung der Erde in der Gesellschaft."[61] The former thought is

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[53] T. III: 3841, Dec. 46.
[54] T. III: 3858, Dec. 46.
[55] B. IV: 305, June 51.
[56] W. VI: 450, 1858.
[57] B. VI: 13, Mar. 57.
[58] B. VI: 13, Mar. 57 & W. VI: 444, *Doppelte Eifersucht.*
[59] W. IV: *Nib.* 186, 2900 ff.
[60] T. IV: 5653, Feb. 59.
[61] W. V: 255, *Moloch.*

in harmony with Hebbel's opinion that it is natural for each sex to find the ideal of humanity in the other.[62]

The development in Hebbel's views of chastity in this period is interesting. In this, as in all other cases, life and the experience it brings modify his views. In 1846, about the time of his marriage,[63] Julia explains woman's frailty from the fact that she cannot truly love without trusting her lover. But that he later saw the beauty and value of chastity for woman may be seen from two epigrams written from the standpoint of a father of a family.

"Ist nur ein Mädchen, wie Maria rein,
Der zweite Christ wird bald geboren sein."[64]
"Fehlt dir auch nur ein Laub an deinem Myrthenkranz,
So ist dein Zauber hin, du bindest Keinen ganz."[65]

And the poet appears to feel that more than merely external chastity should be demanded, for he questions why men have no objection to a union with a girl whose inmost soul has been given to another, although their repugnance becomes great as soon as the body is in question.[66] Yet Volker,[67] in the Nibelungen trilogy, expresses a view which apparently is the poet's own, that a woman's chastity is of the body, a man's of the soul. It is probable, however, that Hebbel had no intention of

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[62] T. III: 4706, July 50.

When Ambrosio (*Tr. in Sic.*. W. II: 91, 276 ff.) says the girls are growing worse, like everything else, and regrets that he can no longer find one who will steal for him until she is sent to jail, and then knit socks for him while she is there, it is very evident that Hebbel intends in this villain's statement no slight to woman.

[63] W. II: 148. 6ff. and 149, 13ff.

[64] W. VII: 199 & T. III: 4208, June 47.

[65] W. VI: 383, July, 56; cf. W. VI: 337, *Die sicilianische Seiltänzerin,* 1848, & W. VI: 423, *Meiner Tochter Christine in's Gebetbuch,* 1862.

Gregorio (*Tr. in Sic.* W. II: 106 vv. 533 ff.) also adds his testimony, although it is of less value, considering the lack of sympathy with which Hebbel treats him:

"Ei was, ei was, man musz die Tochter hüten,
Wenn man ein Weib aus ihr zu machen denkt;
Denn Leute giebt's, die keine Blume pflücken,
Auf der sie eine Spinne sitzen sah'n,
Und Andre giebt es, die kein Mädchen nehmen,
Das ohne Mutter in die Messe geht."

[66] T. III: 3879, Jan. 47.

[67] W. IV: 283, *Nib.* 4536 ff.

expressing inferiority one way or the other. It is simply a distinction between the two sexes. The poet believed that a woman reveals her inmost thoughts and deepest feelings while a man would feel ashamed to do so. On the other hand, a man may abandon physical chastity and not be inwardly crushed as a woman would be. In lighter vein, Hebbel says[68] that women yield because, like roses, they fade even when they are not plucked.[69] [70]

Love still occupies the poet's mind, but it is now the love between husband and wife, rather than the romantic passion between lovers. Two striking expressions of the first two years are evidently born of the new love. "One human being mirrors himself in another—Love."[71] "It is believed that man (Mensch) can die only once. Folly! He who loves can die twice. In this way must he pay for his happiness."[72] Another thought never previously expressed by the poet is that tenderness is essential to the truly worthy lover.[73] A glorification of love has been put into the mouth of Albrecht, "On what foundation could God build the world, if not on the feeling that draws me to you and you to me?"[74] Equally characteristic is the expression of Ute, the old woman, who still praises love and its gifts to her.

"Denn über eines edlen Recken Liebe
Geht Nichts auf dieser Welt."[75]
"Wohl bringt die Liebe uns zuletzt auch Leid,
Denn Eines musz ja vor dem Andern sterben,

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[68] W. VI: 437, *Wenn die Rosen ewig blühten,* July 63.

[69] A recipe for success with women should be quoted here. Hebbel apparently understood the art and his method is interesting.

"Willst Du den Frauen gefallen, so übe ein kleines Geheimniss,
Wenn Du mit ihnen verkehrst; binde und löse zugleich."

W. VII: 197 & T. III: 3574, June 46.

[70] The conventional idea that a woman cannot keep a secret is expressed by Siegfried (W. IV: 41, 665), Kriemhild (144, 2272 ff.) and Hagen (86, 1371). This accusation from Siegfried sounds strange, for it is exactly his own offence.

[71] T. III: 3630, June 46.

[72] T. III: 4242, Aug. 47.

[73] W. VI: 210, *Liebesprobe,* July, 54; T. IV: 5310.

[74] W. III: 173, 1ff. *Agnes Bernauer.* Compare other expressions of interest in this connection which occur in the same play. W. III: 150, 27ff.; 160, 31ff.; 162, 31ff. (coyness of woman); 187, 29ff.

[75] W. IV: 24, 336, f.

Und wie das schmerzt, das magst Du seh'n an mir.
Doch all' die bitt'ren Thränen, die ich weine,
Sind durch den ersten Kusz voraus bezahlt,
Den ich von Deinem Vater einst empfing."[76]

The impossibility of solving the riddle of the cause of love between man and woman is once expressed.[77] And once love is said to be given mostly for characteristics that one does not possess.[78]

To Hebbel's sentiments toward Elise are to be ascribed, "Man has power over everything except his heart. He cannot love when he will,"[79] and "One must love the mother in order to love the child.....Therefore a woman sins who gives love without receiving love; the punishment comes not only on her."[80] This contrasts his feelings for Elise's children and Christine's. In 1849, he sees a new side to love in that man receives from it assurance of his personal worth.[81] And still a lover in 1857, he writes, "Die Liebe ist ein Gut, was allen andern den Schein abstreift."[82]

But as late as 1856, he still shows his allegiance to the romantic love of his youth and conceives it as desecrated by marriage. "Jede Geliebte wird einmal Hausfrau, jeder Purpur Rock, jede Krone Hut,"[83] an expression which reminds one of Ibsen's *Love's Comedy* with its merciless delineation of the loss of poetry in marriage. Similar is the thought in *Amor und Hymen,*[84] "Amor fehlen die Augen, doch Hymen ist doppelt versehen, Zeus verlieh ihm auch die, welche der Blinde entbehrt." This sentiment, though sincere, was only the expression of one

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[76] W. IV: 22, 272 ff. For a kiss as the symbol of love, cf. W. VI: 155 f., *Das erste Zechgelag* v. 5ff; W. III: 405, *Schnitzel aus Agnes Bernauer;* W. II: 133, *Julia* 6 ff.; W. II: 109, *Tr. in Sic.* 603 ff.

[77] W. VI: 447, *An die Exacten,* 1858; cf. T. IV: 5952, Apr. 59.

[78] W. II: 135 *Julia,* 19 ff.

[79] T. III: 4046, Mar. 47.

[80] T. III: 3873, Dec. 46.

[81] T. III: 4609, May 49.

[82] T. IV: 5570, Mar. 57.

[83] T. IV: 5507, Nov. 56.

[84] W. VI: 447, 1858; cf. W. III: 150, *Agnes Bernauer,* 27 ff. The idea that love is blind occurs again in *Die Nibelungen* (W. IV: 104, 1648 ff.)

"Du hast der Liebe widerstrebt, wie Keine:
Nun macht sie Dich zur Strafe doppelt blind."

side of the picture. Hebbel's attitude toward marriage developed in another line. With the announcement of his own marriage [85] comes the sentence which he repeated more than once and seems to have admired, "Wo sich zwei Menschen umarmen, da bilden sie einen Kreis." He is not yet convinced that marriage is best for himself, for he apologizes to Gurlitt for having acted contrary to his principles and claims that he has not changed his opinions, but that there were reasons why it seemed better to marry.[86]

After he has been married about six months, he plans to depict in dramatic form the idea that only through marriage does man become completely man.[87] He shows that he sees it as spiritual union when he speaks sarcastically of people who regard the production of children as the aim of marriage,[88] and when he is interested in the way Balzac shows all the embarrassments a man and his wife must inevitably meet who regard marriage as an institution for self-amusement.[89] It is to him something serious and holy.

In June, 1849, he writes that it is a pity for a man to marry too late and speaks of "die Ergänzung seines Wesens durch ein geliebtes Weib—es ist ein ganz anderes Leben, dies verdoppelte und verdreifachte in frommer Ehe, als jedes andere."[90] By November, 1849,[91] he has decided that few people are naturally adapted to live without marriage, and of these few no one is to be envied.[92] And again, marriage is the completion of a one-sided existence.[93] It is no mere phrase that man and wife are one.[94] But a man should not marry while he is oppressed with

[85] B. III: 327, June 46; W. VI: 313. *An Christine Engehausen,* Aug. 46; W. IV: 70, *Nib.* 1094 ff.

[86] B. III: 335, June 46.

[87] T. III: 3864, Dec. 46.

[88] T. III: 4028, Mar. 47.

[89] W. XI: 308, 1849.

[90] B. IV: 42.

[91] B. IV: 177.

[92] Abrecht's justification of his marriage with Agnes is very touching and could not have been written by Hebbel before his own happy experience. (W. III: 190, 21 ff.) From the point of view of the wife, a similar thought occurs in *Mutter und Kind* (W. VIII: 297, 564 ff.)

[93] B. IV: 218, May 50.

[94] B. IV: 363, Feb. 52.

material cares.[95] Hebbel admires the marriage of Feuchtersleben who chose a poor, illiterate girl to help him through his years of poverty and need, because a woman who belonged to his own class socially and intellectually could not have endured the hard work required of her.[96] By 1856, he no longer believes in "aparte Verhältnisse" and thinks one should wait until he can be properly married.[97] In 1858, he tells of his married bliss in beautiful words and says that only in later life does one know what true happiness is.[98]

In the mouth of Bertram Hebbel has put interesting statements on the subject of the responsibility of parents toward their offspring. "Ich scheue die Missheirathen nicht so sehr, wie er, aber die zwischen Leben und Tod scheue ich allerdings; denn sie ist die Mutter der Gespenster."[99] "...nie darfst Du eins (ein Mädchen) zum Weibe machen, Dein eigener Sohn würde Dich dereinst dafür auf Pistolen fodern!"[1] These two quotations immediately suggest the problems which Ibsen later developed in *Ghosts* and in the character of Dr. Rank in *Nora.*

Motherhood is for Hebbel, as it was his life long, the greatest happiness both for mother[2] and child.[3] This love is given before it is deserved and[4] binds the mother to her child by such a powerful, mysterious bond, that under all conditions, she would know which was her own child by the inner sign.[5] The singer who always touches is the mother as she sings her child to sleep.[6]

To sum up this chapter on Hebbel's relations with women and his theories derived from his knowledge and observation of them, it is well, first, to call attention to the fact that there is a direct connection between his practice in the treatment of the

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[95] B. V: 118, July 53. Hagen's conception of an ideal wife is somewhat of an exaggeration of Hebbel's own. (*Nib.* 2900 ff.)

[96] W. XII: 42 f. 1853.

[97] B. V: 330, July 1856.

[98] B. VI: 117, Mar. 58.

[99] W. II: 142, 16 ff.

[1] W. II: 143, 22 ff. Cf. Bastier (48 f.) who thinks Hebbel was thinking of himself.

[2] W. II: 150, *Julia* 20 ff.

[3] W. VI: 340, *Des Lebens Höchstes,* 1848; cf. B. II: 314, Oct. 43.

[4] W. VI: 63, *Dem.* vv. 1450 ff.

[5] W. VI: 73, *Dem.* 1728 ff. & 50, 1160 f.

[6] W. VI: 377, *Meine Sängerin,* 1851.

women who came in contact with him and his theories about the sphere and character of woman in general, and that the theories follow the practice.

In the days of his idealizing boy-love in Wesselburen, Hebbel's ideal woman is the young girl, pure, beautiful, unattainable. Love is a glorious dream, happy are the lovers whom it unites forever in death. The few theoretical statements point, in the main, to a romantic, optimistic view of marriage, in spite of the fact that in his own home there was an example of a union that could not be called happy.

In the ten years following his arrival in Hamburg (1835-1845) accompanying his ever more serious sins against womanhood is a continual decrease of respect and admiration for woman, an ever more pessimistic and material view of love and a greater and greater repugnance to marriage. In connection with these general opinions there is, certainly as late as 1843, an ideal woman whose charms consist of beauty, youth, complete devotion and love, supreme self-surrender and submission to her 'superior', man.

In Vienna for the first time Hebbel felt respect as well as love for a woman, and, conquering his own natural aversion to marriage, he made Christine his wife, and so gave her an assured and respectable position before the world. Thus he gradually attained greater regard for woman, a more beautiful conception of love and a profound appreciation of the value of marriage for the individual as well as for the race. His ideal also underwent a change in that he rendered greater respect to the mentality and especially the personality of woman.

Yet in all the changes of opinion, in all the development of his ideas, Hebbel continually keeps a few fundamental conceptions. One is, that nature has subordinated woman to man, that she is weaker both physically and mentally than he. Although there are one or two passages which indicate that he places a higher valuation on her moral and spiritual strength, there are others where he distinctly says that here too she is inferior to man. It is her consciousness of this natural weakness which induces woman to enter into the conflict with man. In 1840, while he was thinking of Judith and her deed, Hebbel wrote in his

journal[7] of a woman who does something unusual to free herself from her respect for man. And in 1859, the more mature poet has not changed his views, for he explains woman's constant effort to master man by the fact that she feels her natural position and is impelled to discover in each individual case whether this man is able to maintain the rights of his sex. He concludes, "She strives, therefore, for an object which makes her unhappy when she attains it."[8]

[7] T. II: 1945, Mar. 40.
[8] T. IV: 5648, Feb. 59.

CHAPTER II.

WOMAN IN HEBBEL'S WORKS.

a. WESSELBUREN (1813–1835)

1. DRAMA.

In Hebbel's early works, the characters of the women are colorless and seem to be drawn largely from literary models. His habit of idealizing the young girls he knew, and adoring them rather than loving them, was probably the cause of this. Even the names are many of them borrowed from other poets. He did not know real women and hence he depicted them as his predecessors had done.

The first marked literary influence to be met in Hebbel's work is Schiller's. This poet of youth with his insistent note of idealism, his tendency to rhetoric, his ability to bring dramatic pictures before the mind, will long continue to fire the imagination of young poets.[1]

Mirandola (1830?) [2]

In Hebbel's first dramatic fragment, *Mirandola,* there are evident traces of *Die Räuber.* Not only does the hero become a robber because of the treachery of others, but Flamina is as colorless and extravagant in language as Amalia. Yet even here the young poet is no mere imitator; in the early part of the play, one recognizes the struggle between love and friendship which was later to be more fully developed in *Genoveva.* There are striking differences, however. Mirandola is a hot, impetuous lover, not a calm husband. Gomatzina is Golo but

[1] Eckelmann has worked out in detail this influence, but has put most of his effort on *Judith,* treating the fragments in a few words.

[2] cf. Werner, *Hebbel,* 24 f. and W. V: S. XIV f.; Eckelmann, 51; Scheunert, H. 228 ff.

much nobler.[3] His struggle against his lower self is longer and harder and he is lost, not by the inevitable fate of his own character, but by the treachery of a priest, Gonsula. Flamina is a very warm-blooded Genoveva, she is even more passionate than Judith, but it is a wordy rhetorical passion to which she gives vent. [4] There are one or two indications that might point to love which she feels for Gomatzina. When he first appears, she makes a violent motion as though to rush to him and says, "Das ist er." [5] And later,[6] she cries, "Edler, edler Mann," when he disclaims all right to praise for his brave deed in saving his friend's life. The latter is easily explained and the former may mean that she wishes to express her feelings of gratitude in an embrace and remembers, just in time, that she should maintain more reserve. As Scheunert remarks, her entreaties that Mirandola do not leave her seem to be merely the expression of her love and do not indicate that she fears herself.[7] She is, like Genoveva, exceedingly slow to understand the violent passion she arouses. Fries [8] and Scheunert [9] think that Hebbel probably intended to have her kill herself.

There is no modern note in this character. She is a heroine such as Schiller might have painted, without real part in the action and only arousing pity.[10] In the delineation of woman, Hebbel thus far shows no advance over his predecessors of the eighteenth century.

Der Vatermord (1832)

Der Vatermord written two years later, after Uhland had become the chief literary hero for Hebbel, shows, in general,

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[3] Scheunert (H. 249 f.) thinks Golo more excusable than Gomatzina, because he is not conscious of loving Genoveva when he remains with her. Siegfried also insists upon his staying, in spite of his remonstrance.

[4] cf. Scheunert, H. 236 f.

[5] W. V: 12, 19.

[6] W. V: 13, 7.

[7] Scheunert (H. 237 f.) remarks that this expression cannot mean that he is the man she saw in her dreams, nor that she loves him, for then, "as a pure virgin, she would hate herself."

[8] p. 4.

[9] H. 253 f.

[10] cf. Scheunert, H. 252.

marked advance over the first dramatic attempt.[11] There is, even as early as this, more of Hebbel in it. The terrible events follow each other as they are wont to do in his stories. But there is rather less improvement in the treatment of the female character. She is an essential part of the action and, as such, receives attention, but one misses the careful working out of her struggle, the anguish of her heart, torn between the two men she loves. She is dazed by horror and only effective as a background for the suffering of her son. Her love has endured through all the years of neglect, as she shows by forgiving the faithless lover in spite of her son's entreaties.[12] This fidelity is her one distinguishing characteristic. Long suffering and forgiveness were always for Hebbel a part of the essentially feminine.

In general the delineation of character is slight in this play. But this was brought about by the conciseness of the form, which omits connecting links and gives actions instead of analysis.

2. EPIC.

Holion, ein Nachtgemälde (1830).

Hebbel's earliest extant story, *Holion,* is romantic and sentimental in style and attempts to give an atmosphere of gloom.[13] Therefore Holion must dream of the loss of the two greatest blessings, love and friendship.[14] Laura has no characteristics but is simply an object of affection or, if taken symbolically, the emblem of love.[15]

Der Brudermord (1831).

In the *Brudermord,* as the name implies, the emphasis is on the relation between the two brothers. Laura, like Flamina in

[11] cf. Werner, *Hebbel,* 29 f.

[12] This passive attitude of Isabelle, Scheunert (H. 292 f.) ascribes to the position Hebbel always assigns to woman. He says she neither pardons nor curses her lover. It seems to me, however, that her silence implies pardon.

[13] cf. Werner, W. VIII: S. XI f.; Neumann, p. 6.

[14] cf. W. VII: 73, *Freundschaft und Liebe.*

[15] Scheunert (H. 281 ff.) regards this story as symbolic, and thinks that all the characters are to be contrasted with those in *Mirandola.*

Mirandola, is merely the object of desire for both brothers, and returns the affection of one of them. She is described as a being that has understood the hero and taken from him the "torture of nameless, unsatisfied longing."[16]

Hebbel's advance in mastery over his art which Werner[17] and Scheunert[18] observe in this composition is evident in general treatment, but is entirely negligible in regard to the character of the heroine which is as undeveloped as is the case in *Holion.*

Der Maler (1832)

Der Maler also shows no advance in this respect. The daughter of Meister Dietrich is pale as a lily, beautiful as an angel and sings divinely.[19] She is evidently the ideal which the artist must long for, but never attain.[20]

Die Räuberbraut (1833)

Die Räuberbraut is a third treatment of the tragedy of a woman between two men.[21] The heroine seems more real than the other women characters of this period. Possibly the name Emilie, suggesting as it does his own early love, may be an indication of this.[22] She has "eine engelmilde Stimme"[23] and speaks gently but firmly when she refuses Gustav. When he threatens her life, she sinks with a cry to the ground. When she looks at Victorin, her eyes speak more than deepest gratitude, (mehr als den innigsten Dank).[24] When he asks her to elope with him, she scarcely resists at all but follows him in the night to an unknown home.[25] Yet this yielding woman who seems almost incapable of asserting herself in any way, proves to have heroic

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[16] W. VIII: 4 ff.
[17] W. VIII: S. XII.
[18] Scheunert H. 278 ff.
[19] W. VIII: 13, 5 ff.
[20] cf. Werner, W. VIII: S. XIII; cf. W. VII: 71 f. *Künstlerstreben,* 1832, and 77 f., *Menschen-Schicksal,* 1832; W. VII: 98, *Was mich quält,* 1833 and W. IX: 151 f., 1833.
[21] cf. Scheunert, H. 303.
[22] cf. Werner, W. VIII: S. XVI.
[23] W. VIII: 16, 21.
[24] W. VIII: 19, 31 f.
[25] W. VIII: 25.

courage in the end. To escape the violence of Gustav and, possibly, the knowledge that the man she loved was a parasite of society, she leaps from the window to the rocks below. This is woman as Hebbel loved to believe her, passive in endurance, only stronger to die when the measure of suffering is full.[26]

3. LYRICS.

In the curious, ideal world of the early lyrics, men and women are like the shadows of a dream. They are beautiful and gracious and live only for the one noble passion of their lives, or they are cruel and wicked without redeeming traits. The ideal maiden is perfectly beautiful,[27] innocent [28] and unconscious of herself.[29]

Love is treated daintily and sentimentally. It accomplishes all things, conquers heaven and hell.[30] It is the one immortal thing on a changing earth.[31] When one experiences it, the angels envy him, not he the angels.[32] The yearning it causes produces more kinds of pain than the fields do thorns.[33]

As Schuenert has pointed out, [34] this love is often associated with certain things. Flowers, especially roses, and their perfume are typical both of love itself and of the maiden loved, as the myrtle represents friendship.[35] But it is a love that belongs to an ideal, impossible world, a world where a union in death is the greatest imaginable bliss.[36] Usually one of the lovers has died and the other follows by a mere effort of will or by the granting of a prayer,[37] and this death is painless and desirable.

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[26] cf. Scheunert, H. 311.
[27] W. VII: 96, *Der Traumgott*, 1833.
[28] W. VII: 50 f., *An Laura, etc.* Apr. 31.
[29] W. VI: 199 f. *Die Jungfrau*, Dec. 33.
[30] W. VII: 9, *Sehnsucht. An L.*, June, 29.
[31] W. VII: 237 f., *Die Liebe höret nimmer auf*, Dec. 29.
[32] W. VII: 36 f., *Liebe*, Nov. 30.
[33] W. VII: 61, *Die Mutter*, Jan. 32.
[34] Scheunert, H. 140 f. et al.
[35] W. VII: 26 ff., *Romanze*, Oct. 30, W. VII: 105 f. *Der Knabe*, 33, and W. VII: 50 f., *An Laura*, etc., Apr. 31.
[36] W. VII: 50 f., *An Laura*, etc., Apr. 31, and VII: 42 f., *Das Meerfräulein*, Apr. 31.
[37] W. VII: 19 f., *Laura*, Jan. 30; 24 f. *Er und ich*, May, 30; 51 f. *Der Zauberer*, July, 31; 109 ff, *Ein Wiedersehen*, 1834; 113 f., *Der Schäfer*, Jan. 34.

If one of the lovers remains on earth, the relations between them continue. The tears of the beloved may cause anguish to the one who has died.[38] He may call her back to him after death.[39] He visits the house where she used to live.[40] He fancies she leads him through the church yard to visit all the graves, her own included, and he goes away to wait for her, presumably to wait until he too shall die and meet her.[41] She is immortal in his heart.[42]

Although a lover has appeared to neglect his beloved and thus has caused her to commit suicide and infanticide, he is blameless and worthy of this best joy, a death with the loved one, if he is true at heart. The deserted girl is also in this case entirely guiltless. The child will rest in peace in the grave and so will the father and the mother.[43] But the seducer who has wilfully deserted a woman who loved him must be punished and lose his soul. For him death is no comforter.[44] *Ritter Fortunat* interests one because Irmgard, the deserted maiden, forces the cruel lover to kill her, just as Mariamne allows Herod to remain ignorant of her true feelings, that he may order her death.

The mother is always the mother of young children and this love too reaches its highest, most ideal point in death.[45]

In a few instances, the women of the lyrics are slightly characterized. The maiden who carried the banner in the Battle of Hemmingstedt[46] is unusual in her physical bravery which, however, has not robbed her of a woman's gentleness. In *Ein Lebewohl* there is a glimpse of real life. The lover formerly thought her a dream and now she has proved false. But why

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[38] W. VII: 106, *Romanze*, 1833; cf. Scheunert, H. 102 f.

[39] W. VI: 203, *Nachruf*, June, 34.

[40] W. VI: 204 f. *Nachts*, July, 34.

[41] W. VI: 203 f., *Süsze Täuschung*, Sept. 34.

[42] W. VI: 206, *Nachklang*, 34 or 56. Of the eleven numbers of *Ein frühes Liebesleben* only four depict the beloved as living. Compare the predominance of the death motif in Uhland's early lyrics, indeed, in the early lyrics of most poets. Several of Hebbel's early poems of this nature were written before he knew Uhland.

[43] W. VII: 38 f., *Kindesmörderin*, 1832; cf. Scheunert, H. 66 f., 87, 242.

[44] W. VII: 28 f., *Rosa*, Dec. 29; 88 ff., *Ritter Fortunat*, 1833; W. VIII: 6 ff., *Brudermord*, 1833.

[45] cf. W. VII: 58, *Mein Glück*, Sept. 31; 78, *Die Weihnachtsgabe*, 1832; 105, *Der Knabe*, 1833.

[46] W. VII: 90 ff., 85–116, 1833.

should one remember a dream? He wishes that she may forgive herself as readily as he forgives her, since he knows her as she really is.[47]

The poem *Auf ein altes Mädchen* [48] Christine Hebbel thinks was written concerning Elise Lensing,[49] though it is dated Ditmarschen, 1835. Here again there is a dramatic touch. It is a pathetic picture of a woman whose youth is dead and her life bare and desolute. For all that, there is still enough fire in her breast to rouse a temporary response in the poet's.

In the two rather humorous poems, *Gretchen* [50] and *Die Liebhaber*[51] one receives an impression of real life. The little peasant, who leaves her ring at home when the stranger pretends to think she already has an accepted suitor, and the girl, who mocks the lover who asks to worship her, and gives the key of the garden to the one who regards her as human, do not belong in the same world as the Lauras and Rosas of the other poems.

b. HAMBURG AND MUNICH (1835–1843).

1. DRAMA.

With the life at Hamburg begins a period of discouraging effort for Hebbel. He is trying to overtake the fortunate young men whose education has not been neglected. His pathetic struggle with Latin declensions and other elementary studies cannot but move one to pity for the poet who is not only a man in years, but also in his highly developed view of life. In addition, he was forced to be the recipient of a grudging charity. Hence it is not surprising that his literary production at this time was small in quantity.

In Heidelberg his studies and the necessary pinching economies were still a hindrance to him, but he wrote a few short stories and lyrics.

To Munich may be traced the first beginnings of many later

[47] W. VII: 97, 1833.
[48] W. VI: 207 f., 1835.
[49] Werner, W. VII: 276.
[50] W. VII: 95 f., 1833.
[51] W. VII: 101 ff., 1833.

dramas. The central thoughts of the *Diamant* and *Rubin,* as well as *Judith* and *Maria Magdalene,* were conceived here, while the idea of *Genoveva,* with whose legend he had become familiar in Wesselburen from the Volksbuch, was almost entirely developed by the reading of Maler Müller's drama.

In 1836, a careful re-reading of Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* inspired Hebbel with an interest in the character of Jeanne d'Arc. For years he cherished the thought that he would one day write a play with her for heroine. He was dissatisfied with Schiller's conception and thought to improve on it. Schiller's rhetorical periods and rather imposing style struck him as out of harmony with the simple, modest country girl whose destiny it was to save France by her unwavering faith in the power of God.[52] Later, in 1840,[53] he decided that the key to the poetic problem was naiveté and in Paris[54] he expresses the thought that it is lack of this quality which causes the feeling of dissatisfaction one has when reading Schiller's tragedy, for all its beautiful flow of language and the fine poetic thoughts that play around the figures.

This conception of a woman, used as an instrument in the hand of God for the salvation of her people, reappears in *Judith* and many of the ideas developed in meditating on the French political martyr found expression on the lips of the Jewess whose act was necessary, because from the Jews was to come Christ and the new religion, just as Jeanne d'Arc must save France because France was to give the world a revolution.[55]

Die Dithmarschen (1840)

Immediately after his return to Hamburg, Hebbel had a severe attack of gastric fever and, strange enough, in the midst of his sufferings he worked out whole scenes of a tragedy which was to be called *Die Dithmarschen.* Later, in 1840, while he was writing *Judith,* he composed some of these scenes. The thoughts which were struggling for expression formed themselves anew

[52] W. V: 42; B. I: 170, Feb. 37.
[53] T. II: 2087, Aug. 40; cf. W. IX: 239 f., 1840.
[54] T. II: 3099, Apr. 44; cf. W. XI: 192, 1848–49.
[55] T. II: 2064, Jul. 40.

about the figure of the "maiden" who has in common with Jeanne d'Arc and Judith a mission to save her people by stepping out of her sphere. She is also the mouthpiece of Hebbel when she says that she had the courage to do it only because no one else had.[56] Several other figures in the fragment, lightly sketched and vague though they are, show how the characters in later plays were already forming in the mind of the poet, as Boje in his conscious development into a rascal suggests Golo.[57] The sister of the "maiden" is a fallen woman who shows resemblance to Clara and Julia; with the latter, she has loved the man, with the former, she now despises him. Differing from either, she is to be punished for her fault by being drowned.[58] She is escaping when she hears of her sister's brave deed and returns of her own free will to die.[59] The sin of Uriah's wife, according to the Archbishop, lay in the fact that she wore no veil. This makes one think of Genoveva and Agnes with their too great loveliness,[60] as, in a somewhat different sense, of Rhodope.

The result of all this labor, this life rich in thought but poor in comfort and even in a pure and complete love, was to astonish the world, his friends and even the poet himself in a drama in which for the first time Hebbel attained an independent, individual style. He did not suspect that this brooding, lonely struggle through the dark was to bring him suddenly to the light, to his first period of great production.

Hebbel's speculation in regard to the relation of the sexes, founded on his experience with such women as Elise and Beppi, led him to see the conflict between man and woman as inherent in the human race. The opinions of his contemporaries influenced his ideas and probably made them more emphatic than they otherwise would have been. Young Germany believed in the emancipation of woman. Their demand was rather in the direction of social than of political freedom, although they asked for this also. The doctrine of "emancipation of the flesh" they

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[56] W. V: 83, 1 f.

[57] W. V: 96, 25 ff

[58] This fate suggests Clara's *(Mar. Mag.)* death, though she inflicts it on herself.

[59] W. V: 92, 21 ff.

[60] W. V: 84, 21.

consistently applied to women as well as men, which was exceedingly distasteful to Hebbel. He most energetically denied that he was an adherent of the movement and claimed in *Judith* to have taken a strong stand against the emancipation of women.[61] "No man can be more repelled than I am by the folly of our time, which idolizes a few women, abnormal and erratic (formlosen), even if gifted, and expects to abstract new laws of life from a morbid condition, from a return to chaos." This reminds one of Ibsen's denial of an interest in the same question after the publication of *A Doll's House*. Both men were certainly sincere in their remarks, and yet both were so full of the ideas of their times that they later helped along the very cause with which they believed they were out of sympathy.

This same hostile attitude found expression in the little history of the *Jungfrau von Orleans*,[62] where Hebbel contrasts the modest, retiring Jeanne d'Arc and her great deeds with "unsere emancipationssüchtigen Weiber," who talk rather than act. In 1840 he still considers it revolting that a woman should take active part in warfare, even to take the place of a brother who has fallen.[63]

Judith (1840)

When one has finished reading *Judith* one seems to have witnessed a great duel between two stupendous personalities, Judith and Holofernes. And these personalities stand for much more than the historical characters. Each symbolizes two great features of life. While he is both personified heathenism and man, she is Judaism and woman; that is, their struggle is both historico-religious and social. This double symbolism makes a double result possible and, as a matter of fact, neither is absolute victor nor yet vanquished. As champion of her religion,

[61] B. II: 103, Apr. 41 and T. II: 2324.

[62] W. IX: 298 f. 1840. He continues: "Uns're emancipationsüchtigen Weiber (es giebt ihrer Gottlob nur wenige, in Deutschland zur zeit gar keine, und sie sind bekannt, ja berühmt, was recht gut ist, da sie nun doch aus Unwissenheit Keiner heirathen kann) würden grosze Thaten höchstens darum vollbringen, damit sie davon reden, ja sie beschreiben könnten! O über die Närrinnen, die glauben, es gäbe sechstausendjährige Irrthümer der Geschichte! und über die Thoren, die in der Krankheit eine Lebensquelle sehen!"

[63] W. XI: 283 ff.

Judith wins, but as woman, she loses. Hebbel felt that she must lose. Her deed represents "die That eines Weibes, also den ärgsten Contrast, dies Wollen und Nicht-Können, dies Thun, was doch kein Handeln ist."[64] He says in the introduction to the edition of 1840 that he wished to show "den Unterschied zwischen dem echten ursprünglichen Handeln (Holofernes) und dem blossen Sich-Selbst-Herausfordern" (Judith).[65]

This lack of ability in Judith comes from the nature of woman and the reason for her existence. Here is the characteristic opinion of Kleist put in the mouth of Judith. She says, "A woman is nothing; only through man can she be something, she can become a mother through him. The child that she bears is the only thanks which she can offer nature for her existence."[66] With all development that Hebbel's conception of woman was destined to undergo, this fundamental idea never altered in any material way, as may be seen from the sentence written in Vienna, "The Madonna should really die after the birth of her child."[67] As late as 1855, he expressed the same idea in a quotation to the effect that woman is only on earth in order that man may live again and that she willingly returns to the eternal mother after she has borne a son.[68]

For this duel of the sexes Hebbel wished to present two typical champions. Holofernes was to be man, who should appear before woman "in all his greatness,"[69] and she was to be woman, pure and simple, who loves in man something higher which she wishes to draw down to herself. To Hebbel there is always a certain compulsion mixed in woman's love, so that it dies as soon as she recognizes that the man she loves is beneath her.[70] But Judith, from the nature of the case, had to be something more than a typical woman. She was a woman who did a strange and terrible deed and Hebbel felt that this must be

[64] T. I: 1802, Nov. 39.
[65] W. I: *Judith*, 410.
[66] W. I: 19, 11 ff.
[67] T. IV: 5269, July, 54.
[68] T. IV: 5635, 55.
[69] B. II: 35, Apr. 40.
[70] T. II: 1944, Mar. 40.

explained and in such a way as to prevent her from being revolting. And after he had puzzled out a solution of this difficulty, he realized that it was questionable whether Judith had not lost her symbolic meaning and become a problematic character.[71] The poet is quite right in this; Judith is no more woman than Holofernes is man. No one would be willing to accept as a fair type of manhood this eastern tyrant who boasts of his wonderful deeds and makes revolutionary plans, but does actually nothing but murder an under-officer, exercise rude, so-called justice, mock at a coward, and dishonor a woman. He possesses arrogant courage and self-confidence, but he lacks all the finer and nobler qualities of a man. He is false to his ruler, irreligious, a beast of sensuality and knows love no more than fear.

The difficulty with Judith is entirely different. She has much that is beautiful in her character but, as was before indicated, the motives assigned for her deed are questionable. The Judith of the Bible was a "heroic cat" to Hebbel,[72] a Charlotte Corday,[73] because she does not sacrifice her own person. Her deed can become human only by taking vengeance for herself.[74] Therefore, she must yield her heart to Holofernes and spiritually suffer what she physically inflicts upon him in order to become a tragic heroine. But Judith is an instrument in the hand of God sent to overthrow heathendom in the person of Holofernes. How is it possible for this woman with a divine mission to love the very man she must destroy? This was the great difficulty in Hebbel's eyes. A second one arose when he began to ask himself how an admirable woman could face the necessary humiliation which must precede the deed.

The first difficulty he would answer as he does a similar problem in the case of Jeanne d'Arc. Though God may make any feeble human being his instrument for performing the mightiest deeds, he himself "cannot prevent the crushing of his instrument under the very wheel that it for a moment stops or turns

[71] T. II: 1872, Jan. 40.
[72] W. XI: 61, 1844.
[73] W. XI: 13, 1843.
[74] B. II: 87, July, 40.
[75] T. I: 1011, May, 38 and II: 1958, Apr. 40.

in another direction."[75] Judith shows her human frailty by her inability to feel unmixed hatred for Holofernes, and this comes from the fact that she is a woman. As woman face to face with Holofernes she loves him and he dishonors her. This new fact changes all her motives, which were at first almost purely patriotic and religious. She performs her deed, but, though the instrument of God, she performs it as a woman on the man who has dared to make her a mere tool of his passion. This change of motive is a psychological truth which Hebbel realized very clearly and used consciously.[76]

The second difficulty led Hebbel back to the dim and complicated maze of feminine psychology. His theory that woman's mission is to bear men, not to kill them, confused the problem for him still more. Had Judith been a boy, no matter how weak and frail, he would have been satisfied with a divine call; but a woman must have her deed more definitely explained.

He first took the story as given in the Bible and considered it. Judith is a widow and that did not suit Hebbel. Full as he was of ideas about the Maid of Orleans, nothing but a virgin would satisfy him. "But a virgin soul can sacrifice anything but itself; for with its purity falls the foundation of its strength, and it can no longer have the advantage of its innocence when it has lost that innocence."[77] So she must remain a widow, she must have lost this "virgin soul." "But a widow may not resolve to take a step whose end she knows, but a virgin may or a widow who is also a virgin."[78] So Judith must be put in this unusual position. Hebbel needs for his heroine a woman intensely, almost abnormally passionate. She must possess not only the tremendous enthusiasm of a religious zealot, but she must be a woman whose sexual instincts have been thwarted until her originally passionate nature is rendered even more intense. Such a woman he has depicted and to explain her he was compelled to invent the story of the marriage night.

Hebbel's ideas of woman at this time were still of the old

[75] T. I: 1756, Oct. 39; II: 1958, Apr. 40; B. II: 33 ff., Apr. 40; W. XI: 13, 43; XI: 61, 44.

[77] T. II: 1872, Jan. 40.

[78] B. II: 31 and T. II: 1931, Mar. 40.

school. And in addition, Judith is a woman of the Orient.[79] Therefore she accepts unhesitatingly all oriental ideas as to her own position and shows the tendency to sensuous passion natural to her country. This is well illustrated by her description of her sensations as she was conducted to her husband's house.[80] Then comes the mysterious vision, or whatever it was, that checked the ardent lover and turned him to prayer. Now she urges and he shrinks. It is not a pleasant scene and the fiery words in which it is painted to us by the heroine render it no more so, especially since the author has used the device of having her tell it to her attendant. Such a scene would be forever locked in the secret recesses of a woman's nature and would never recur to her own mind without a burning sense of shame. In madness or delirium she might reveal her secret, but never to explain her refusal of another man. It might be explained by saying that Judith's eastern ideas are different from ours, but that would have the opposite effect. Her feeling of disgrace would be all the more poignant if she felt herself discarded as unfit for the only position which as a woman she could fill, and she would guard such a secret with her very life.

Such a woman as this, endowed with surpassing beauty and rendered morbidly passionate by the strange thwarting of her natural instincts, is the instrument chosen by God to save her people. But she may not yet perform her task. First it must be shown that it is necesary for a woman to act. Only "when all men see in danger nothing but the warning to avoid it, has a woman attained the right to a great deed."[81] "She does not overlook man and his greater right", Hebbel tells us.[82] Therefore there follow scenes in which all the cowardice, weakness and folly of the men of Bethulia are shown, as well as all

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[79] She is not unlike the slave in the poem of the Vienna period (W. VI: 187) *Die Odaliske:*

"Sie stammt aus jenem Lande nicht,
Wo ehrbar-blond der Weizen reift,
Und stachligt-keusch die Gerste sticht,
Wenn man sie noch so leise streift."

[80] W. I: 15 ff.

[81] W. I: 24, 20 ff.

[82] T. II: 1944, Mar. 40 and B. II: 35, Apr. 40.

the intense suffering to which the people are already exposed. Thus the conditions which Hebbel felt to be essential are fulfilled; unusual conditions demand an unusual instrument, and consequently the difference between man and woman may be set aside and she may act. A higher power must now take part to save this people and Hebbel uses no half-miracle, he does not "increase the natural strength of the man" but lends "unnatural powers to the woman," "dem zitternden Geschöpf."[83] So Judith in her hours of fasting and anguish has at last heard the divine message and, with unwavering faith, she arises to go against Holofernes. As the poet has said,[84] she does not see clearly all she must do to attain her ends. But two things she does see, first that she is to kill this dangerous enemy and, second, that the road to her deed leads through sin. "Before thee is the impure pure; if thou didst place a sin between me and my deed, who am I that I should dispute it, that I should withdraw from thee! Thou madest me beautiful, now I know why; thou didst deny me a child, now I feel to what purpose."[85] Werner thinks [86] that Judith did not realize this last point, but in that case Hebbel's elaborate motivation would be useless. With his views the task was a difficult one. He reasoned, a virgin could not take such a step because a virgin can sacrifice everything but her virginity and for a widow it would be base. Therefore he makes her a physical virgin and a spiritual widow. One moment's thought shows that thus she has the disadvantages of both, having everything to sacrifice and yet having the experience of the widow. The whole question is injurious rather than helpful to the play. No pure, sensitive woman, were she maid, wife or widow, could bring her mind to the sacrifice unless, in her frenzied state, she felt it to be a divine command. This is what Hebbel assumes, that a religious enthusiast, after days of fasting and prayer, considers herself inspired as to the manner of accomplishing her deed.

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[83] W. XI: 283 f., 1849.
[84] T. II: 1978, Apr. 40.
[85] W. I: 26, 12 ff.
[86] Werner, *Hebbel,* 126 f. and 131; cf. Nolte, 24, Bamberg, *Einfl.* etc., 20, Pfeffer, 17.

She casts aside the thought of self and gladly goes to her task. Her failure later comes from the fact that the sacrifice ceased to be a sacrifice, that she gave her inner self as well as her body to the enemy. This caused the sense of guilt in the powerful scene in the antechamber after the deed. To this sense of guilt was added the torturing realization that she had killed "the first and last man of the world." [87]

Some light is thrown on the character of Judith by considering her relations with the three men who loved her. Of her husband, we know little. That he was a pious, God-fearing man, loving and tender in character and much older than Judith gives the impression that with him she would perhaps have had a peaceful, uneventful existence, had not providence kept them separated. But no divine interposition was necessary to save Judith from loving Ephraim. To this type of woman nothing could be more revolting than a timid, shrinking passion that begs and entreats but does not know how to demand. She, the religious enthusiast and the fearless heroine, cannot but despise the man who lacks trust both in God and in his own strength. It is easy to see the nature of the feeling with which Holofernes inspires Judith. It is not a real love, but hatred of the enemy of her people and of the desecrator of womanhood, strangely combined with a sense of awe at the strength of the man as shown, not alone in his splendid military success and his almost godlike disregard of lesser men, but even in his horrible deeds of cruelty. And this last feeling, inflamed by the unhealthy state of Judith herself, arouses a passion most painful to contemplate. One watches with anxiety the pitiful efforts she makes to awaken the better side of his nature so as to justify her feeling, and again the vain endeavor to make her hatred drown it. But her feeble human strength will not avail, especially since this exhibition of the courage of her enemy follows so immediately after the pitiful cowardice of her fellow-citizens. The punishment of Ephraim seems to her but just. She is blinded to the hideousness of this human monster by his glittering appearance. This, too, is a characteristic which

[87] W. I: 79, 12 ff.

Hebbel in 1840 would surely have ascribed to women, and one that is not unnatural in Judith.

In the feeling that this is the only man she can really love, she acts like the girl who confesses her crime to the judge because she loves him,[88] and tells Holofernes that she has come to kill him. One might naturally read into this the act of a noble nature that scorns, even in its weakness, to use deceit as a weapon against an enemy. Although Hebbel evidently thought of it otherwise and interpreted the words as given above [89], perhaps the reader may believe that this is a case where the poet has "builded better than he knew," and see in it a new beauty for Judith. But whether she merely wishes or really deserves to win his respect by these words, she must suffer for them the cruel humiliation of being mocked for her pains and then used as a mere instrument of intoxication to be cast aside afterward like the veriest worthless, harmless creature. In her rage at such treatment she forgets the object of her coming and remembering only herself, she kills her ravisher and not the enemy of Judea. When the practical Mirza quietly points out two things to her, the revulsion of feeling sets in. Judith then realizes that she has little right to take vengeance for treatment which she brought upon herself when she left the gates of Bethulia to go to a man notorious for such deeds toward women. This and the dreadful new thought that she might bear this monster a child make her deaf to the praises and rejoicings of her town and leave her inwardly crushed and filled with terror. Hebbel felt that the close of his play alone made Judith a tragic heroine, because she possibly has conceived a son for Holofernes and so a Nemesis who, on the principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, must one day be her murderer.[90] The point seems strained. The real horror of the situation lies in the thought of bringing into the world a son of such a being.

Aside from Judith and Holofernes the characters in *Judith* are of little interest. Mirza is the only possible exception. She

[88] T. III: 4383, Mar. 48.
[89] B. II: 35, Apr. 40.
[90] W. XI: 13.

represents the normal, common sense woman in contrast with Judith, and, like the mother in *Mirandola,* she plays primarily the part of confidante. She is slightly characterized by her devotion to her mistress as shown by her refusal to eat when Judith does not, and in her willingness to follow and meet all the dangers in the camp rather than stay behind and think of Judith as there alone. Yet she always opposes Judith and her ideas. She thinks it would be better for her mistress to marry Ephraim and by no means approves of her going to Holofernes. When the natural result follows, she tries to prevent Judith from killing him and uses all the arguments that Hebbel himself would have used. And when the murder is accomplished, she points out the consequences with terrible accuracy. She is intended by the author to be a model woman, but she really serves as his mouthpiece in a sort of running commentary on the actions of the heroine which, in the poet's eyes, are unwomanly and beyond the narrow circle in which "das Weib" belongs.[91]

Judith, then, in the eyes of her creator, is a noble, beautiful, passionate woman; yet being a woman, incapable of any real action. Her strength and ability are loaned her, so to speak, by God in order to carry out his own divine ends. But "since man even in the arms of a god does not cease to be a man",[92] even in this divine mission she remains subject to feminine weakness and passion. She has stepped beyond the limits set for her sex and she has at most done what is right for wrong reasons.[93] She is a tragic heroine with tragic guilt even in Ludwig's sense of the term, and Hebbel was quite right when he said that the play was aimed against the emancipation of woman. Yet this woman, while inspired by the Deity for her fated deed, acts so remarkably like the modern woman, who is

[91] Most men, I am told, would entirely agree with Hebbel that Judith in beheading Holofernes, is stepping out of the sphere of woman. I must confess I do not share this feeling. An assassination, especially when the victim is asleep as in this case, must always be hideous, whether it is done by a man or a woman. But if a woman, following a divine command, performs this ugly task, I cannot see that she is more guilty than a man would be.

[92] B. II: 36. Apr. 40.

[93] T. II: 1872, Jan. 40.

not inspired but who, though not free from mistakes nor even sin, is still strong in character, noble in purpose and brave in deed, that his contemporaries may be pardoned for missing the author's intention and seeing only his creation.[94]

Genoveva (1841)

Judith was barely finished when new events in the poet's life developed a plan for a second drama.[95] In the summer, Elise had gone away for her health and Hebbel was left in Hamburg without her. During her absence he met and fell violently in love with Emma Schröder and, in his egotism, he pained the gentle soul of Elise with an account of this new passion. He was really not intentionally cruel and when he realized what he had done, his sense of guilt was very great. While he was still consumed with these conflicting feelings he read Tieck's *Genoveva.* Immediately the seed already sown in Munich by the reading of Müller's play was ripened. He had but to look into

[94] Bamberg (*Einfl.* etc. 29, 38) thinks that the lesson taught by the play is that woman is neither ruler nor slave, but intended as mother to care for the holiest interests of social life; that men should grant her desires, although she is submissive, so as to make her passive task less painful. Most critics see in it the conflict of the sexes, (Berg, *Das sexuelle Problem,* etc. 31, Werner, W. I: S. XVI f.) as, indeed, Hebbel himself (W. I: 410) said it was.

Poppe (107) thinks the poet's own experience with women, especially with Elise Lensing, more important than his attitude toward the living question of the emancipation of woman.

The character of Judith has been much criticized. Dingelstedt (219), Treitschke (469) and Krumm (298) find both her and Holofernes exaggerated.

She has been considered mannish (Poppe, 118 f.) and, on the other hand, entirely womanly, but inclined to reflection (Pfeffer, 33 and 59; Werner, W. I: S. XXV f.). Many find her unpleasantly conscious (Kuh, *Leben,* II: 289 f., Werner, *Leben* 131, Pfeffer, 6). She appears hysterical in her sexual instincts to Bulthaupt (III: 129 f.) and Böhrig (22 f.), whereas Pfeffer believes that, though she has unusually powerful tendencies and longings of this kind (27; cf. Lublinski, 12), she has little sexual feeling (32 f.). Julian Schmidt (505) agrees rather with Bulthaupt, and says she has a demoniac desire to destroy, to tear to pieces what she loves and to murder when her passion is aroused. He continues that *this* is what her husband saw in her. Böhrig finds that there enters into her motive vanity and a desire to show men that she was braver than they (20, cf. Lublinski, 10).

Some like the idea of the virgin widow (Bamberg, 41, Böhrig, 19, Werner, W. I: S. XXIV f.) and some condemn it (Bulthaupt, 129).

The change of motive is now defended (Bamberg, 41; Collin, Engel-Mitscherlich, Cf., 11; Werner, W. I: S. XXI f.; Pfeffer, 52), now attacked severely (Bulthaupt, 136 ff; Nolte, 24 f.)

[95] T. II; 2122, Sept. 40.

his own tormented heart and conscience to see a very fair image of Golo. Emma's youth and beauty added to Elise's sweet, patient endurance gave form to the conception of Genoveva, and the play was begun in September, 1840. Just ten days before this he had written in his journal of Elise,[96] "Never, never have I seen her like. She has a nobility of heart which surpasses all nobility of mind. And not a trace of egotism. Oh, when I often tortured her, satanically wounded her to the depths, her soul always sent forth a lovelier glow; so that I, in the midst of my passionate violence, often suddenly shrank before her smile, her tears, as though I had scourged an angel, who could only avenge herself by showing her glorious nature. She is a spring of inexhaustible love." After the completion of the play while again writing of Elise, he speaks of the "wonderful, heavenly harmony" of her nature and says that without her he could never have written *Genoveva.* "I owe her everything, the outer and the inner man, my existence in the world and in art."[97]

Hebbel says of *Genoveva,* "The piece is really a second part of *Judith;* it presents the suffering victim, the saint, as the latter the acting victim, the heroine, who as she kills, dies, and both together complete the circle of the view of life of Judaism and Christianity."[98] Earlier, with the same idea in mind, he said that both plays differ from the dramas of other men in that he connects the whole directly with God.[99] This is so evident in *Judith* that it cannot but be recognized, but in *Genoveva* one must look somewhat deeper. Very little is said of religion. The author has evidently wished to explain the whole action by means of the passions of human hearts and yet, behind it all, a careful reading will reveal the great, mysterious God and his method of salvation by the mediation of saints.[100] As surely

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[96] T. II: 2098.

[97] T. II: 2402, Dec. 41.

[98] B. VI: 143, June, 58; cf. B. VIII: 35, 13, Aug. 52.

[99] T. II: 2174, Oct. 40.

"Ihr (seiner Dramen) Unterschiedenes liegt wohl darin, dass ich die Lösung, die andere Dramatiker nur nicht zu Stande bringen, gar nicht versuche, sondern immer unmittelbar an die Gottheit anknüpfe."

[100] T. II: 2337, May, 41.

as Judith is fated to save her people by the murder of Holofernes, so surely is Genoveva fated to attain to sainthood through cruel sufferings. This invisible power behind it all is only revealed in occasional passages, for instance, in Genoveva's and Golo's dreams and in her forebodings of the evil to come, but more markedly where the ghost of Drago returns to tell Margaretha how long she may remain on earth and what is allowed to her and what not. Thus Golo's terrible passion and Margaretha's forbidden arts become but instruments in God's hands to accomplish his inscrutable ends. This is a Christianized motif from Greek drama where the very guilt is decreed by Fate.[1] Such a view of life makes man a part of a glorious spectacle, a puppet on an infinite stage in a stupendous tragedy. And he is no puppet of wood and wire and gay rags but a creature endowed with reason that must decide as the unseen lines dictate, with a conscience to suffer for his God-imposed guilt and a heart that throbs with passion, and that pours forth its blood when the inevitable avenging sword does its work. Such a composition is no longer purely a drama but a whole system of philosophy. In *Judith* the unseen God is Jehovah and the end is the death of the representative of heathendom and the crushing of the representative of woman because she was forced to step beyond her sphere. In *Genoveva,* the God of the Christians destroys all of the chief instruments, Golo, Margaretha, Katharina, Balthasar, Hans, Klaus, used in Genoveva's martyrdom. Only the count and her son survive and they are left alive that they may abandon the world and pray in solitude, while the saint herself must suffer and die to win her immortal crown. Yet her glorification has a softening effect and the drama is less terrible and depressing than *Judith,* and this is as it should be.

That Hebbel regarded Genoveva as an ideal woman is shown by the sentence, "In Genoveva I have tried to do honor to the nature of woman which I place far above that of man."[2] In Munich,[3] he had already written in his journal the words,

[1] T. II: 2275, Feb. 41.
[2] B. II: 127, Nov. 42.
[3] T. I: 1516, Feb. 39.

"Durch Dulden thun; Idee des Weibes." Judith by attempting action was, he thought, doomed to destruction; but Genoveva, by staying within the limits of her sex and enduring patiently and unresistingly her martyrdom, becomes a saint and a means of salvation for others. A reviewer of the drama pleased Hebbel greatly by especially praising the presentation of German womanhood in this play.[4] He also approved of a French criticism by Saint-René Taillandier,[5] who says that Judith is the woman who mistakes her destiny and Genoveva "the noblest and most submissive of creatures."

This conception of her character determines her treatment in the play. Hebbel very rightly saw that Genoveva is not a dramatic figure. She is absolutely passive and can hardly be said to have any struggle at all. Once or twice Golo offers to die to free her and so she has a decision to make which might have been enlarged and given prominence, but Hebbel has chosen not to do so and the offer is more important for Golo than for her. She never hesitates and the only sign of struggle lies in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation", as she pours out the poison. She never for an instant has a desire to yield to Golo; but terms with aversion from his entreaties. According to modern feeling she buys her sainthood too cheaply, in spite of all her physical agony. One almost longs to see her kindle for just one instant in response to this passion so much more all-consuming than is that of Siegfried. One would like to see her grow to be a saint and not always have been one. In such a play she would be the heroine and Golo the secondary character. She would no longer be the woman of the old legend but would have become a more comprehensible figure and, surely, a more interesting one. Tieck, though his heroine is almost like Hebbel's, has given one or two hints that Golo was attractive to Genoveva that suggest such a solution.[6]

Now, what is the positive side of this character? One finds one's self perpetually tempted to explain her in negative state-

[4] B. II: 267, Apr. 43.
[5] B. V: 364.
[6] Tieck, *Werke*, herausgegeben von G. L. Klee, I: 242. Leipzig, 1892.

ments. She knows no passions, no natural human resentment of wrong; even her pride is negative, it refuses to explain. Though she resists Golo it is purely a passive resistance. She makes no effort to free or vindicate herself. Even her love for Siegfried has been outwardly passive, so much so that he always thought her cold. And her passion for him could not have been very intense or she would have been incapable of withholding its expression with the intention of revealing it only at death. All this Hebbel expresses by calling her the "moon behind the stormy clouds of passion." But there is one point in which even the most passive woman becomes a heroine if she is attacked. In that one point even this Genoveva exhibits positive qualities. She is a mother and she is willing to plead for her child, to endure the long torture of seven years of cold and hunger for the life she has given to the world. It is as fine a martyrdom as the physical world can offer. Nothing can give a more complete picture of Hebbel's first ideal of woman than this. He disliked heroic women. A woman's place was in the "narrowest sphere", her mission to endure, her glory to avenge herself only by showing her angelic nature. In short, she was to embody all the ideals of Christianity except that of the Church Militant. From that she was to be excluded on pain of Judith's fate. She was to have just enough of earth about her to be a source of pleasure to her husband. For herself she was to need no joy except that of serving him and her children. Genoveva is the model for women to follow and Judith the warning of what they are to avoid.

Although Genoveva so well represented Hebbel's ideal woman, it was not she but Golo that attracted him to this story. Both he and Siegfried are more important for the action than she. Like the *Merchant of Venice,* the play is named for the central figure, rather than for the most dramatic character, which was unquestionably Golo. When Hebbel read Maler Müller's play, he analyzed all the characters and came to the conclusion that Siegfried was the guiltiest in that he did not comprehend the character of the woman into whose inmost soul he had looked.[1]

[1] T. I: 1475, 120 ff. Feb. 39.

Golo's love for Genoveva is "his misfortune, his guilt and his justification." "The love itself is sin," but this sin is not against Genoveva but against Siegfried. To Hebbel, as yet, a wrong done to a loved woman is not so unpardonable as one done to a friend. She is a bit of rather precious property, whose owner, her husband, can be hurt by her injury.[8] "Golo can not possibly so outrage Genoveva as he has already outraged Siegfried and man is mad enough to see in the great sin a sort of license for the lesser one." This sin is the more painful to the sinner the nobler he is, and from this follows a natural and "by no means unjust" hatred of the cause of his sin.[9] "Moreover, it is just the noblest (edelste!) seducer who can least believe in the holiness of the cold woman; why should she stand higher than he, and if she must fall for some one, why not for him?" [10] This first view of Golo justifies his attempts at seduction and his persecution of Genoveva, everything but the guilt against his friend, and is quite different from the Golo of the play two years later. This was written after the author had himself experienced some of the demoralizing effects of an unholy passion. Just before the completion of the play he writes,[11] "In Golo I depict the inmost nature of passion, which if it does not exactly unchain all the wicked impulses, at least suppresses and hampers the good ones—till the evil is there."

Margaretha is the exact opposite of Genoveva.[12] As the latter is so absolutely perfect as to be undramatic, so the former loses by being completely a human devil. There is one passage where she speaks of her child which evidences some faint vestige of human feelings, but that is all past and it is only a slight hint.[13] She has two functions, first, to suggest the most diabolical of all the schemes against Genoveva, the one in which she is made to appear guilty, and, second, to prove her guilt to

[8] T. I: 1475, 84 ff.
[9] T. I: 1475, 37 ff.
[10] T. I: 1475, 63 ff.
[11] T. II: 2211, Jan. 41.
[12] B. VI: 143, 13 ff. June, 56. This reference probably explains Hebbel's statement that Margaretha is not a minor character (W. I: 432).
[13] W. I: 132, 1011 f.

Siegfried with the aid of the deceiving magic mirror. She comes from the old legend but this first use of her is new in Hebbel's play. It is far better to make her plan Genoveva's ruin than Katharina who has too much of the good element left in her to conceive such a design. The latter is the only woman in the play who has a struggle to undergo, the one between her love for Golo and her fidelity to her mistress. The mother-love wins and she helps to bring about the martyrdom, but unable to endure her sense of guilt, she throws herself under the feet of Siegfried's horse on his return. This character is genuinely dramatic but of too little prominence to be more than a sketch.

To Hebbel, Genoveva is the perfect ideal of womanhood. She is entirely submissive and saintly, beautiful and noble. She does not go beyond the limits set for her sex, she does not attempt to enter the sphere of action. Her tragic guilt consists only in her too great perfections, especially chastity, which tempted Golo to sin.[14]

[14] Bamberg (45) thinks the play illustrates the fate of woman, and that it shows both objectively and subjectively that (58) her normal being and her beauty consist in passivity.

Golz considers the central thought the religious one which Hebbel intended. He calls Genoveva (124) a reincarnation of Christ and Golo of Judas. He also criticizes the character of the heroine (125; cf. Pfeffer, 6) because she is not a real human being but a saint, merely a symbol. The play to him is pessimistic (107) in tone because all the characters are on the side of evil, except Genoveva, the saint, Siegfried, who is neutral, Fatime, a heathen, and Klaus, a madman.

Gottschall (495) says that Genoveva's Platonic renunciation is her tragic guilt and that the play is the tragedy of marital fidelity: that is, Hebbel is attacking the institution of marriage. Bamberg (64 f.) claims that this is false because Genoveva really loves Siegfried and Tristan also loves his wife at home and not Fatime. Böhrig too (24 f.) denies Gottschall's statements. He thinks the sexual problem of vital importance in the play, but that the central thought is the opposition of heavenly and hellish powers (25). Bulthaupt finds no central idea. To him the play is only a dramatization of the legend (143).

The critics mostly find the character of Genoveva colorless and lifeless because of her passivity (Bulthaupt 143, Golz 125) but Engel-Mitscherlich says she is not a saint in the sense of the church, but a perfect woman. Many realize that she was Hebbel's ideal of womanhood (Bamberg 58, Zinkernagel 132, Werner, *Hebbel,* 152). Pfeffer (6) sees her, as he does all of Hebbel's heroines, as too conscious of her sensations and too inclined to study herself. Her tragic guilt is mostly understood to consist merely in her beauty and nobility, characteristics which she possesses in excess. (Kräger, 305).

Margaretha is usually interpreted as the symbol of evil, the enemy of beauty and the contrasting figure to Genoveva. (Bamberg 59, 66, Werner, *Hebbel,* 150, Pfeffer, 109). Pfeffer also thinks that it is the instinct of mother love in Katharina which causes her to be false to Genoveva.

Der Diamant (1841)

Although realism is, from the nature of the case, earlier to develop in comedy than in tragedy, it is always a kind of realism that gives little idea of the true character of the individuals. It brings out the small foibles, the external features, and one has to study carefully to determine justly and accurately, even in the greatest comedies, the real and essential personality of any character. Tragedy, naturally brings out these deeper sides which comedy must leave to be guessed. At first thought, one might judge that Hebbel's comedy would be an exception. He demands that the whole action be bitter earnest to the participators and only humorous to the superior on-looker. The only difficulty with this is the word "superior". In a review of the great comic characters of the world, one soon sees that a very important reason for their being comic is that each one takes his ridiculous self so much in earnest. But the greatest humorists always seem to stand in among their creations with a genial smile. They say, "See how foolish we human beings are." The superior position suggests the satirist or the schoolmaster. We smile, but the bitter taste remains. Genuine comedy is not bitter, but sweet as new wine.

Hebbel took himself intensely in earnest and yet occasionally he sadly realized how small even the greatest man is and how he himself was not even that greatest. The hard features of his life cut too deeply into his nature to give him the serenity necessary for comedy. It was not till later that he was able to attain anything approaching the tone required. As late as 1847, he still considered the *Diamant* his most important work both in form and content,[15] although he had previously seen that the fantastic, serious part of the play was unsatisfactory.[16] With this high valuation we cannot agree, though there are undoubtedly several excellent comic scenes.

The symbolism of this comedy lends it interest. The jewel

[15] T. III: 3961, Feb. 47; cf. 3943, 64 ff., Jan. 47 and 4168, May, 47.

[16] T. II: 2641, 13 ff. Jan. 43. Also in 1852, he sees that he may have erred in handling these figures in "Tapeten-Figuren-Styl." He says that he did it to keep them in the background. B. VIII: 41, 1 ff. Aug. 52.

is for the author the symbol of the "empty show of earthly life"[17] which injures all really affected by it. Barbara, because of ignorance, and Jacob, because of his generous disposition, remain themselves and escape the baneful influence, but all the rest, even to the ethereal princess, are threatened with ruin through its possession or the desire of its possession. The Jew suffers most because, by swallowing it, he changes from an owner to a valuable piece of property himself.

Of the characters some, as Jacob and the Jew, are very well depicted, but the women are of slight importance. The princess is a sort of dream-creature. She possesses all of the fine delicate characteristics of the creations of fairy fancy. Even as a child she was only rosy and blooming at night and in the daytime colorless and pale. The boundary between real and imagined things does not exist for her. The diamond with its weird story was always an object of horror to her. Her fantastic imagination immediately suggested that she was to be the last of her race. Her mind is slightly unbalanced by all this and when the poor dying soldier appears before her, he seems to her the very spirit that was to demand the jewel again. From this moment she grows worse and worse, till, through believing herself dead, she would actually have died had she not been saved by the return of the diamond and the sight of the peasant who returned it. The whole is strange and unnatural. The attempt at psychological explanation only renders the fairy-tale more incomprehensible. And it is no better with the interspersed scenes of striking realism. They may have become more humorous from the juxtaposition, but the unity of the comedy has been sacrificed.

Barbara appears a few times in the first act and then disappears from the play. She is simply a kind, scolding peasant woman who feels it her duty to protest against the excessive generosity of her husband. The jewel does not injure her because it means nothing to her. Her idea of splendor is to have a whole new cap, instead of merely new ribbons for the old one. When she gets it she hopes to venture to look in the glass again.

[17] W. I: 306, 153 ff.

One enjoys thinking of all the pleasure this simple-minded, hard-working woman and her congenial Jacob will have with the half million they are to get.

Märchen. Die Poesie und ihre Werber (1839–1843?)

The fragment, *Die Poesie und ihre Werber,* written at about the same time as the plays we have been discussing, reminds one of the court scenes in the *Diamant* in its symbolism and remoteness from real life. The characters are just as lacking in real flesh and blood, just as prettily graceful and symbolic, as some of the delicate figures in modern fresco painting. In this fragment we have four female characters who typify poetry and her maids. Natalie, poetry, beautifies everything she touches, the flowers do not fade in her hands, the birds may learn to sing from her. She has given up her power, bestowed her magic gifts on her maids and is now their servant. But even without her decorations she is still the loveliest, while in their hands the gifts cannot be used.

The maids are characterized quite well even in a few lines. Minona is a petty soul, small and jealous, not only of the others, but even of her mistress. Although Agalje is ready to quarrel with her and give sharp words in reply, she is an ardent admirer of Natalie and friendly with Euphrosine. The last is the finest of the three, too noble to quarrel, although she is the chief admirer of Natalie.

Maria Magdalene (1843)

After the completion of *Genoveva* and the *Diamant* came a period of inability to work. The beneficial results of Hebbel's stay in Munich and his reunion with Elise were over. Their relations were hard for both. She as yet endured patiently all the suffering which was her lot, but his sense of guilt rendered him even more difficult than usual. Their money affairs were in a most deplorable state and Hebbel was almost in despair. At last, in December, 1842, he decided to go to Copenhagen to see if any help was to be had there. In spite of illness and many vexatious delays in getting attention, Hebbel was far

happier in Copenhagen. He met not only Oehlenschläger and Thorwaldsen, but also many other cultivated people and warm admirers. With the happiness and hope and, perhaps, the separation from her, his love for Elise experienced a sort of Indian summer. The letters are full of tender admiration and even yearning love. With hope and love came, as always in his life, a period of production. Several scenes of the first act of *Maria Magdalene* were written while he was still ill with a painful attack of rheumatism.[18] Then came discouragement because of the obstinate illness and then the glad news that he had been granted a travelling stipend for two years.[19] Preparations for the trip and the critical article *Mein Wort über das Drama,*[20] an answer to Heiberg's attack on *Ein Wort über das Drama,*[21] and the completion of the first act of *Maria Magdalene*[22] occupied most of his time till his departure in September, 1843. It is thought that there is another love affair which belongs at the time of this last stay in Hamburg.[23] But there is almost nothing known of it. The slight references might refer to Emma Schröder with whom he was reconciled about this time.

Almost immediately after his arrival in Paris, Hebbel continued *Maria Magdalene* and had it almost completed when the news of his son's death reached him. But in spite of all the confusion consequent on this event, he finished the play, December 4, 1843.

Maria Magdalene, ending as it does this period of Hebbel's production, is a fitting close in that it contains a synopsis of all his previous life. In the whole atmosphere of the home of the cabinetmaker we have reproduced the gloomy surroundings of the poet in Wesselburen. Here are misery and sorrow to a most unhealthy extent. Here are the parents which such conditions naturally produce, the hard, tyrannical father, the overindulgent mother. The story is that of Beppi, the brother is her brother, the secretary is Hebbel himself. The character

[18] Mar. 10, 1843.
[19] Apr. 4, 1843.
[20] Aug. 43.
[21] Jan. 43.
[22] May, 43.
[23] cf. Werner, *Hebbel,* 126

of Clara in its submission and self-forgetful love bears strong resemblance to that of Elise as Hebbel describes her. From her, too, must come the ability to depict the feelings of this girl who sees disgrace facing her and can find no way out of it.

The plot of the play combines Beppi's two love affairs and the arrest of her brother.[24] When she confessed her first trouble to Hebbel, he was for a time unable to forgive the poor child her previous offence, and she in her despair went home and "drank cold death", as he expressed it, because she thought it was all over between them and did not care to live. This is omitted in the play. Clara dies to save her father from death, not because life has become worthless to her, though she is separated from the man she loves. The change was necessary in order to bring out the most fundamental thought in the play, which was that such a tragedy is inevitable under existing social conditions. The prejudice of Anton and the secretary were to Hebbel the cause of Clara's death. Her suicide because of disappointed love would be more universal but no longer a criticism of society.

Hebbel had shown in *Judith* how, by the intervention of divine providence, Judaism must overcome heathenism, and in *Genoveva,* how the Christian saints in their turn must subdue the evils of Christianity itself and, by their sufferings, save not only themselves but others. In *Maria Magdalene* he turns his attention to the social surroundings into which providence sets an individual and tries to show how from these narrow environments and their resulting limited vision must follow the tragedy of human life. "In the background are the conceptions of the family and morality, of honor with its bright and dark sides and there is a suggestion of results which will probably not be received into the catechism of life for centuries."[25] To show this he selected the very limited conditions from which he himself had suffered, the life of the family of an artisan. No one can deny his knowledge of his subject nor claim that the center of the whole play is untrue to life.

[24] T. I: 574, 582, Jan. 39 and B. VII: 302 f., Feb. 63.
[25] B. II: 342, Dec. 43, cf. T. II: 2910, Dec. 43 and W. XI: 62 ff.

It is probably a lamentable fact that there are many Claras among this class of people, only they do not often become heroines of tragedy but simply add to the mass of suffering, disgraced womanhood. To produce a tragedy it was necessary to add the condition that the father is oversensitive concerning his honor, a state induced or increased by the supposed crime of his son. Although not impossible, he is a distinctly unusual character. The secretary, Friedrich, is exceedingly natural and, to the average mind, Hebbel's implied blame of him seems as exaggerated as does his similar feeling toward Siegfried in *Genoveva*. Leonhard, too, alas, is only too true to life. His rascality comes simply from limitless egotism and the conditions which produced him.

One is forced to recognize the "purpose" of the play, to feel that it is a direct attack on social conditions. The poet seems to wish to show that such things are possible so long as a woman must marry some one, no matter whom, so long as the dowry forms an essential part of the marriage, and so long as, even under these conditions, any method which a woman takes to obtain the necessary husband is not admitted as justifiable.

Hebbel demanded as his ideal that every character of his play be in the right.[26] This demand created difficulties particularly in the case of Anton and Leonhard. The question which the author throws out at the end of the drama is interesting in regard to Anton. The secretary says, "Sie hat gethan, was sie konnte. Er war's nicht werth, dass ihre That gelang." And Anton replies, "Oder *sie* nicht." Hebbel certainly does not agree with Anton, but he cannot put the blame entirely upon the father. The answer that would probably have suited the author is that neither is to blame, but the social conditions which produced them.[27]

It took sophistry to show Leonhard to be in the right. He could only be rescued by being made a complete cur. "Leonhard ist ein Lump, aber eben deswegen—ein Lump kann nichts

[26] T. II: 2926, Dec. 43.
[27] cf. T. I: 677, Apr. 37.

Böses thun.[26] This, in turn, reacted on Clara. She could not love such a being; hence, her fall had to be motived by other feelings. Again, as in the case of Judith, Hebbel attempted to probe the dark places of psychology.

It seems difficult to write calmly of the character of Clara. She has been thought to be tender, gentle, without strength.[28] She has been called over worldly-wise, a woman determined to have a husband at any price.[29] She has been considered a spotlessly pure creature by some,[30] while others think the stain on her character almost sufficient to deprive her of sympathy.[31] There are not only these opinions, but all possible shades between them.

These differences from the standpoint of the critics are to be explained from the nature of the character portrayed. She is all of this, naive, yet worldly wise, pure, yet pitifully marred. The contradictions arise partly from Hebbel's view of the relation between man and woman. When a man considers woman as almost exclusively a creature of sex[32] he will expect her to yield easily to a man's persuasion and will look on this as "woman's fate", and not as a fault.[33] To him marriage consists merely in a form and society is doing gross injustice in applying the word "disgraced" or "fallen" to a woman in Clara's position.

Hebbel did not at first regard Clara as really guilty. She is "pushed out of the world".[34] Her terrible fate springs from a minimum of guilt.[35] By January, he says she has really committed no fault, ("ein Fehltritt, der eigentlich gar keiner ist").[36] And yet, six years later, in Vienna, when his ideas of womanhood had changed, he wrote, "I think that I can justify

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[28] Engel-Mitscherlich, 46 f.

[29] Berger, *Dram. Vorträge,* 194; cf, Bulthaupt, III: 148.

[30] Volkelt 256, Engel-Mitscherlich 46, Pfeffer (too moral) 16 f., Bamberg, 89.

[31] J. Schmidt. 507; Krumm, 299 f.; Treitschke, 471; Bulthaupt, 148 f.; *Grenzboten,* 1846, IV, 127.

[32] See p. 30.

[33] W. II: 66, 11.

[34] B. II: 246, Mar. 43.

[35] B. II: 348, Dec. 43.

[36] T. II: 3003, 44 ff. Jan. 44.

the fall of Clara in *Maria Magdalene* if we only keep in mind that I was not trying to present ideal humanity."[37]

She was "pushed out of the world" by the fault of the three men Leonhard, Anton and the secretary. The first would not keep his promise to marry her, the second could not endure the disgrace Clara caused him and the third could not face Leonhard's knowledge of the facts. To Hebbel there was nothing revolting in Clara's yielding to Leonhard at the very moment of her re-awakening love for the secretary. Yet this makes her a Judith without love for Holofernes and without Judith's religious fervor and high purpose. Jahnens once asked Hebbel if Judith might not have done her deed because she hopelessly loved a man who was her superior. One might paraphrase the poet's answer and apply it to Clara.[38] The paraphrase would read something like this: "If Clara loved Friedrich, how could she give herself to Leonhard, if she admired him, how could she venture on a deed from which he would be compelled to draw back shuddering, something which he rejects as absolutely impossible and must reject?" Either the poet had changed his conception of woman when he wrote *Maria Magdalene* or he regarded the difference in class sufficient to explain the difference in feeling the two women show. But even according to his own ideas, Clara does not represent a noble womanhood. One can pity her, grieve for and excuse her lamentable lack of delicacy, but one must always shrink from her. On the whole, Clara is semi-naive. She has an inner nobility which makes

[37] B. IV: 202, Mar. 50; cf. B. VIII: 41, 17, Aug. 52. Scheunert (P. 144 ff.) claims that Clara's fall is to be regarded as the symbol of the breaking of all the bridges between her and the world of the secretary. That certainly is the case; but if he means us to understand that the fall is *only* a symbol and not a physical fact, the whole attitude of Anton and the secretary becomes incomprehensible. If, on the other hand, we take it and all the rest as fact used symbolically, we are not helped any. There still remains this blot on the character of the heroine, no matter whether the whole is a symbol or not. Scheunert thinks a solemn oath on her part would have been sufficient. That is possible, but it would entirely change the nature of the objections of Anton and the secretary, and Leonhard's withdrawal would have placed matters on their old basis, as no spiritual law could expect a woman to keep such an oath if the other party no longer desires it. In other words, the whole becomes absolutely impossible without a physical fall (cf. Pfeffer, 99).

[38] T. II: 1944, Mar. 40.

her superior to her fate and her surroundings. This she shows in her tender love for her parents, even the stern father, in her scorn of Leonhard's baseness, not only toward herself but toward those he has deceived for worldly gain, and in her truthfulness to him and to the secretary. By deceiving either of them, she might have escaped her fate. It is this very beauty of character which makes the one false step all the more incomprehensible and painful. Had she shown lack of fine feeling throughout, one would not feel so at a loss on this point.

The role of the mother is a short one, but she is well characterized. She suggests Hebbel's descriptions of his own mother, who always believed in her son and protected him from his father. One could almost imagine that she, too, would have died at the mere thought of his disgrace. The mother in the play is a pious, hard-working woman who accepts patiently, but not without feeling the situation, the harshness of her husband. She is generous to the poor, an earnest, concerned mother, with an unusual tenderness for her son whom she can deny nothing.

The women of this play are more realistic and lifelike than any Hebbel had before portrayed. This may be explained by the fact that they move in a social plane familiar to the poet. He felt at liberty to use the material of his own daily life.

In regard to woman's relation to man, this play marks no advance in the poet's views; but her relation to society Hebbel sees in a slightly different light. Judith, by stepping out of her sphere as a woman, incurs her tragic fate; but Clara, by fulfilling her mission as a woman, is pushed out of the world by society. In other words, *Judith* is a criticism of woman and *Maria Magdalene* of society. That is, in 1840, Hebbel sees woman's demand for liberty as an attack on the proper rulings of society. By 1843, he sees that society sins against woman.[39] The last step, the admission that woman has a right to protection

[39] Eloesser (p. 218) says that this is the first drama of the long line of modern tragedies which criticize society as sinning against the hero, and show it as affecting him more than the hero affects society.

against attacks on her individuality, he did not take until after he knew Christine Enghaus.[40]

2. EPIC.

The short stories published during this period throw little new light on Hebbel's conception of woman. As always in this form of composition, his work consists largely in character sketches of men. The women are mostly in the background and have little individuality.

Among the plans for stories which never were completed, there are a few that show that the poet was occupied with woman and her relation to man. Only once does the plan indicate that the interest was to have been in the character of the woman. He is contrasting two sisters. One is destroyed by noble self-sacrifice, the other becomes "ein treffliches Frauenzimmer" by cold selfishness.[41] One feels quite certain in ascribing this to Elise's influence.

The girl who was to have made every effort to lose her maidenhood without success was probably to have formed the central figure in a humorous sketch somewhat similar to *Schnock* or *Schlägel*.[42]

Three other plans are concerned with problems of love. Once the devil fails in his attempt to destroy a girl by a pure love, because, "The soul that is true is not lost."[43] Once there is a rivalry between an officer and a doctor for the hand of a maiden.[44] This reminds one of the *Obermedicinalräthin,* but the officer is the favored suitor in the plan. The doctor only marries her because of the death of the officer. The most interesting plan tells the story of the girl who refuses to marry her lover, because, as she says, she does not wish to be bound. But the real reason is that the lover may not be bound. This Hebbel regards as the proper attitude of a woman. She should not think at all of her own position, but make it her aim in

[40] *Genoveva* is not a step in the development because of the peculiar problem of the play. She is a saint, and the suffering results from this fact. There is no criticism of her nor of society either.

[41] W. VIII: 369, Zweite Hamburger Zeit.

[42] W. VIII: 370, Zweite Hamburger Zeit.

[43] W. VIII: 355 and T. I: 9, Mar. 35.

[44] W. VIII: 369, 1841.

life to leave the man she loves free. It never occurs to him that the man should think of her. He evidently intended to contrast this attitude with the many wretched marriages which are lasting because each thus secures his or her own base interest. (Sicherung schmutziger Interessen).[45]

Barbier Zitterlein (1836)

Barbier Zitterlein is really a character sketch, a study of a man half maddened by grief for the loss of his wife. The daughter who has become the object of his selfish jealousy has no marked characteristics. She is devoted to her father, and a submissive, loving wife, a woman entirely as Hebbel at this time thought woman should be. But she is colorless and uninteresting.

The gypsy woman who arouses Zitterlein's jealousy has no individual characteristics and merely exhibits the conventional greed and cunning of her class.

Die Obermedicinalräthin (1837, probably)

The whole tone of this story is humorous and somewhat cynical. It illustrates the ideas hostile to marriage which Hebbel expressed at this time.[46] The husband makes sport of his wife and points out all possible indications of advancing age to cure the young man of his infatuation. She is affected and sharp-tempered, though one can hardly blame her for her anger when her husband takes such pains to make her ridiculous.[47]

Ein Abend in Strassburg (1837)

In this sketch, the gentle beautiful maiden and her kiss seem to be used symbolically to stand for the pleasure which the

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[45] W. VIII: 370, Zweite Hamburger Zeit.

[46] cf. W. VIII: 63, 15–25.

[47] One immediately thinks of Hebbel's later expression, "Die Weiber haben den Zweck, jung zu seyn," (T. III: 3325, Feb. 45; cf. T. III: 4729, Sept. 50) when one reads this story.

poet enjoyed in Strassburg during a tramping trip he took there in 1836.[48]

Eine Nacht im Jägerhause (1842 or 1837)

The only woman in *Eine Nacht im Jägerhause* is the old mother of the forester. She has an unprepossessing appearance, but is otherwise not characterized, except where her son explains why she has but one eye.[49] He says she lost it in defending her husband's savings from a thief. This virtue is evidently supposed to stand for all, and to prove her an admirable old woman.

3. LYRICS.

In contrasting the poems of the first and second periods of Hebbel's life, one notes a change from the abstract to the concrete. Whereas the poems written in Wesselburen express to a great extent the love of a poetic boy, dreams that ignore the great facts of life, in the Hamburg and Munich period, there is a growing tendency to let real life color the picture. Yet always, until the day of his death, Hebbel showed an instinctive love of the unreal, the miraculous; witness the world of the court in *Diamant,* all of *Rubin,* the magic ring in *Gyges,* not to mention the numberless cases where dreams and portents are accepted with childlike faith. In every period the poet occasionally reverts to the style of poetry he wrote as a boy. *Ein frühes Liebesleben* was completed in Vienna. His advance is shown by the fact that he added new features. Together with striking improvement in form, in smoothness of expression and versification, there is corresponding enrichment of the range of thought.

As was said, a few poems strongly suggest the Wesselburen period, for instance *Spuk,*[50] in which he gazes with rapture on the windows of the room where his dead love used to sleep, or

[48] B. I: 103, Oct. 36.
[49] W. VIII: 272.
[50] W. VI: 202, Dec. 36

Einziges Geschiedensein,[51] in which he laments that he can never know the cause of the smile on his beloved's lips as she sleeps. Here again are two women who die of love, the one because of the death,[52] the other because of the unfaithfulness[53] of the lover. There are dreams in which dead women that he has loved[54] or who have loved him return to him.[55]

At the very beginning of Hebbel's acquaintance with Elise Lensing, two poems were written which reveal the immediate influence of a genuine sentiment on the poet's lyrics. The first tells how the sick soul is healed by the beneficent effect of a sympathetic spirit.[56] The second[57] is Hebbel's first real love poem. It bears the marks of sincerity. There is no death in it, but full-blooded life. The character of the love which it expresses, however, is so passionate, so physical, that it does not seem to belong with such a spiritual emotion as prayer. Scheunert[58] explains this by the poet's belief that love is something divine and holy. And so it is; but, in making such a statement, one must remember that there are nearly as many meanings for the word "love" as there are people who use it. Had the poem expressed a love with more of the spiritual, though with no less of the physical in it, one would feel that such love was near to prayer. But as it is, it is necessary to add to the poem a something which is not in it, to find it in good taste.

This earthly, physical view of love appears even more markedly in *Das griechische Mädchen*[59] which expresses the emotions of a Greek maiden as she hesitates under the fiery glances of a youth who has seemed almost like a god to her. She remembers the old poetic stories of the human loves of her deities, and when she finally yields, she fancies he is Jupiter, the god of the thunderbolt.

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[51] W. VI: 212, Jan. 37.
[52] W. VII: 128 f., *Hochzeit,* Oct. 35.
[53] W. VI: 176 ff. *Die Spanierin,* Aug. 41.
[54] W. VII: 134 ff. *Wiedersehen,* May, 36 and W. VI: 205 f., *Offenbarung,* Aug. 35.
[55] W. VI: 214 f. *Letzter Gruss,* Jan. 43; cf. T. II: 2534, Apr. 42.
[56] W. II: 125, *Die Seele,* 1835.
[57] W. VII: 126, *Ein Gebet,* May, 35; cf. W. VI: 212 f. *Sie sehen sich nicht wieder,* July, 41.
[58] Scheunert, H. 89.
[59] W. VII: 137, May, 36.

A further step in this direction is observable in the *Abentheuer am Neujahrs-Abend.*[60] The jesting tone in which this story of a forbidden so-called love is told is most different from that used by Hebbel before his connection with Josepha Schwarz. The frivolous ending makes one realize still more keenly how the one-time lover of Doris Voss has altered his opinion of woman and of love.

The thought that the existence of the child obtains pardon for the mother occurs here three times;[61] but there is no longer any mention of the murder of the child. The emphasis is rather on maternal devotion to it. Here again real life has influenced the poet. As is quite natural when one remembers Hebbel's experiences in these ten years, in addition to this despairing love of the disgraced mother, grief for the death of a child is the typical expression of mother love.[62] He also wrote during this time, however, a pretty cradle song,[63] and two poems which picture the peace in which a mother enfolds her child when he sleeps in her lap,[64] or with her by him.[65]

Schön-Hedwig[66] is simply a ballad treatment of the story of *Käthchen von Heilbronn* as Hebbel himself saw later.[67] Although it is on this account of less value as an original production, this fact does not decrease the interest for the student of the poet's conception of woman. It depicts the ideal woman whose great charm is selfless love and submission. The beggar maid in another poem accepts the rebuff of the insolent knight in silence; but she shows that she still has pride for she disdains the cloak though her body shivers with cold.[68]

The charming poem, *An Hedwig*,[69] deserves special mention.

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[60] W. VII: 147, Dec. 36.

[61] W. VI: 272 f., *Versöhnung*, winter, 36; W. VII; 160, *Auf eine Verlassene*, Sept. 38; W. VI: 178 f. *Virgo et Mater*, Sept. 41.

[62] W. VII: 127 f. *Mutterschmerz*, July, 35; W. VII: 162 f. *Kinderlos*, 38; W. VI: 179 f. *Die junge Mutter*, Apr. 41 and W. VII: 241 f. *Der erste und der letzte Kuss*, Feb. 42.

[63] W. VII: 165 f., Jan. 39.

[64] W. VII: 157 f. *Leben und Traum*, Feb. 38; cf. B. II: 314, Oct. 43.

[65] W. VII: 140 f., *Stillstes Leben*, July, 36; cf. W. VI: 227, *Nachtgefühl*, May, 36 and W. VI: 240 f., July, 36.

[66] W. VI: 172 ff., Nov. 38.

[67] B. V: 109, 1 f., June, 53.

[68] W. VI: 181, 37.

[69] W. VI: 208 ff. Feb. 37.

It refers to the actress of Wesselburen days, and is an exquisite memory of an early, pure love. She was like the spring which promises but never fulfils. He wishes that she may also be his death angel, so that at evening as at morning he may look toward heaven.[70]

c. PARIS AND ITALY (1843–1845)

During the painful years in Paris and Italy, Hebbel did little work of importance. The only exception is the lyrics, which reached a beauty of form never before attained by him.[71] The poems are largely objective, however. They are the expression of the poet's enjoyment of the external beauty around him, rather than the record of deep emotions.[72] Hence, with few exceptions, they are singularly colorless in regard to love and woman.

The sonnet *An eine Römerin*[73] is thought to refer to the beautiful Signorita Gagiati, concerning whose charms Hebbel wrote to Elise in January, 1845.[74] It expresses rather admiration for her beauty and the simple life she has led than love.

In Naples, he seems to have felt a more genuine passion, which has left traces in two poems. The first one[75] expresses a longing for a glimpse of the two sisters in the full light of day, rather than, as formerly, by twilight. Evidently this wish was granted, for in the second poem,[76] he regrets that he has aroused love in Angiolina, the younger sister, by thoughtlessly using her charms as consolation for the indifference of

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[70] Other poems on love at this time are W. VI: 143 f., *Sturmabend,* May, 41; W. VI: 153, *Scheidelieder,* Jan. 37; W. VI: 206 f. *Auf eine Unbekannte,* Apr. 36; W. VI: 211, *Tändelei,* May, 36; W. VI: 276 f., *Sommerreise,* Mar. 39; W. VI: 232 f., *Das Mädchen im Kampf mit sich selbst,* Sept. 39, cf. Scheunert, H. 97.

[71] cf. Werner, W. VII: S. XLVII.

[72] Hebbel pays tribute to the effect of beauty in two poems, *Meeresleuchten* (W. VI: 282, Jan. 45) and *Juno Ludovisi* (W. VI: 325, Sept. 45), where the goddesses Venus and Juno are used to symbolize the eternally beautiful.

[73] W. VI: 308, Mar. 45.

[74] B. III: 194 ff., Jan. 45.

[75] W. VI: 286, *Das Venerabile in der Nacht,* July, 45; cf. T. III: 3497, Sept. 45.

[76] W. VI: 215 ff. *Stanzen auf ein Sicilianisches Schwesterpaar,* Aug. 45.

Emilia. Kuh[77] tells this same story, but he may have derived it only from the poem.[78]

The idea that a young girl is fruit ripe for plucking[79] has been mentioned before.[80] A similar view of woman occurs in *Die Kirmess;*[81] in another, a strange maiden who smiles and beckons drives away all thought of death even at a funeral.[82]

When *die Verschmähte*[83] realizes that after all her efforts her love will never be returned, she longs for death and wishes that he might have seen her only as a charming vision, a something unattainable. Hebbel may have been thinking of Elise when he wrote this. Here death is desirable for the wretched. But in the case of happy lovers it is no longer the beautiful culmination of love, but its cruel end.[84] It is a chilling presentiment of death that makes the girl shrink at the sudden darkness as she stands before her mirror asking, "When am I to be a bride?"[85]

Woman as wife and mother is barely mentioned in the poems of this period. Besides the philosophical treatise on death sent to Elise at the death of Max,[86] there is only a picture of a peaceful home where the mother and child are waiting for the husband to return.[87] It is worthy of notice that both of these references occur at the end of the year 1843, while Hebbel was still debating the question of his own marriage.

The ballad *Liebeszauber*[88] was always one of Hebbel's favorite poems. It is more youthful in tone than the other poems of this period and resembles rather those that were written in Hamburg. This may be explained by the fact that it was finished early in January, 1844, shortly after Hebbel's arrival in Paris. Another point of interest is, that it expresses the love of the

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[77] *Leben* II: 201 f.
[78] cf. Werner, W. VII: 278 f.
[79] cf. Scheunert, H. 152 f.
[80] W. VI: 213 f., Jan. 44.
[81] W. VI: 278, Mar. 44.
[82] W. VI: 329, July, 43.
[83] W. VI: 319, Apr. 45.
[84] W. VI: 210 f. *Auf die Genesung eines schönen Mädchens,* Mar. 45.
[85] W. VI: 280 f. *Das Mädchen Nachts vor dem Spiegel,* Aug. 45.
[86] W. VI: 294 ff. Dec. 43.
[87] W. VI: 221 f. *Das Haus im Walde,* Dec. 43.
[88] W. VI: 156 ff. Jan. 44.

girl quite as strongly as that of the man. This is the only poem in which this is the case, except where the man does not love at all.

The only story published during this time was *Der Rubin,* which, however, was probably written in 1837. It shows none of the tendencies of this period and was probably published without change.

As in the play, *Der Diamant,* the jewel is used symbolically. The heroine who yearns for life is imprisoned in the cold stone. When she emerges from it, she proves to be beautiful, desirable and uninteresting as are most of the heroines of fairy tales.

d. VIENNA (1845-1863)

1. DRAMA.

There is a tendency about Hebbel's development that is very marked. When he has to suffer deeply and bitterly he cannot write anything of value. Then he can only stubbornly struggle along and gain strength for the fresh burst of renewed life which comes with a new joy. The most striking example of this is the sudden change from all the wretchedness in Italy to the new hope-bringing life in Vienna. The great period of production did not begin immediately, but neither did the real peace and happiness of his life with Christine. The unpleasantness with Elise was even aggravated by his marriage. He was forced to control his own repugnance for the past of his wife, and their child, born in December, died in a short time.[89] Elise's son Ernst, died in the same year.[90] Shortly afterward, she paid them a visit which must have had many trying phases. Nevertheless, Hebbel wrote some stories and poems and was able to finish two plays in this year, *Trauerspiel in Sicilien* and *Julia.* They are his weakest works and he himself felt them to be the close of a period in his development.[91] How could it be otherwise? During the time when *Julia* was being completed

[89] Feb. 47.
[90] May, 47.
[91] B. IV: 71. Dec. 47.

the two women who most profoundly influenced Hebbel's life and works were living in the same house with him. The coexistence of two such different ideals was a cause of the vagueness and confusion so evident and disturbing in this play.

After the birth of his little daughter[92] and Elise's departure for Hamburg with Christine's son Carl, the life in Vienna became more normal, peaceful and much happier. Now is the time for a new era of production, and in the spring of the next year appears *Herodes und Mariamne,* the brilliant herald of this second great period, just as *Judith* proclaimed the first one.

Trauerspiel in Sicilien (1847)

For our purpose, as well as for most others, the *Trauerspiel in Sicilien* is of small importance. The central ideas in the play are the terrible side of the police system and the extremes assumed in the question of the rights of possession.[93] That is, here again are two social problems which seem to the poet to need solution. The story which was used to illustrate these general principles was one that Hebbel had heard in Naples.[94] The name of the heroine is that of one of the beautiful girls whose society he enjoyed there.

The play is not a pleasing one, although the story is told well and naturally in dramatic dialogue. All characters are revolting and exaggerated, except the hero and the heroine, and he is too rhetorical and she too colorless. Hebbel described Angiolina as the human being in Paradise among wild animals,[95] and considered her one of his best creations.[96] But she has far too little individuality to hold a place beside the heroines of any of the great plays. She is inexperienced and does not see that the soldiers are mere brutes. This seems explicable until they begin to rob her of her few valuables, and then it seems stupid. She is modest and retiring. "Mir war von jeher aus

[92] Dec. 47.

[93] B. IV: 7, Jan. 47; cf. B. V: 55, Sept. 52.

[94] T. III: 3491. Aug. 45.

[95] T. III: 4746, Nov. 50: cf. B. VIII: 42, 26 ff., Aug. 52.

[96] W. XI: 401, 1851, cf. Kuh, *Leben* II, 300, who says that she is the only well-drawn character in the play. But Wiehr (163) says, "Die einzige Frauengestalt . . . ist ein bloszer Schemen geblieben."

dem Fenster schauen, so viel, wie Ander'n auf die Strasse geh'n."[97] Her shrinking timidity when she ventures out alone from her father's house makes her feel as if she had left the world. Only loyalty toward the lover her father treats so scornfully and terror of Gregorio have tempted her to leave her home. Sweet and patient, she is another embodiment of Hebbel's conception of the ideal woman. "Durch Dulden thun" might be applied to her. Submission is the keynote of her character, only bold for love and, even then, timidly bold.

Thus far there seems no change whatever in Hebbel's views of woman. It is exactly the ideal which he gave to the world in *Genoveva*. But there are a few verses which mark the play as belonging to a transition period:

Sebastiano: "Und sie, sie sündigt sicherlich doch eher,
Wenn sie sich einem Vater, wie dem ihren,
Nicht widersetzt, als wenn sie endlich sich
Erinnert, dasz sie Mensch ist, wie er selbst,
Und ihm "..... [98]

That is, a woman need not endure what fate, in the form of her father, imposes upon her. No, she sins if she does not resist him when he is in the wrong. Angiolina herself does not see this but acts from inner necessity. But her lover makes the statement for the poet.

Julia (1847)

While he was still at Rome, Hebbel began a play which he called a "second part" to *Maria Magdalene*. One of two things may have impelled him to do this. His experience of a larger life may have shown him that his Clara was not sufficiently typical. Or his entanglement with Elise may have induced him to show in Bertram under what conditions a man could marry a woman he did not love. Whatever his reason, he transferred the scene from Germany to Italy, gave his characters superior social rank, abandoned the old motive of the fall and

[97] W. II: 96, 348 f.
[98] W. II: 103, 493 ff.

depicted a man willing to forgive such a flaw in his wife, one who does not shrink from the knowledge of the facts on the part of the seducer.

After his arrival at Vienna, the work progressed but slowly and was not completed until October, 1847. He himself felt it to be the end of an epoch and was glad when the last word was written.

As in the case of Genoveva, Julia is the center of the play, but not the principal character. All initiative is taken by Antonio, Tobaldi and Bertram. She allows herself to be seduced because she fears to call her father and see him murder Antonio; she leaves her home because she is sure she would confess her fault before the image of the Virgin; she has not the courage to meet death at her own hand, and, at once, trusts herself to an absolute stranger when he offers to marry her.

With Antonio's return, the tragic conflict begins in the souls of the two men, but Julia never hesitates for an instant. Her former passivity, not to say flabbiness, suddenly disappears and she defends Bertram and reproves Antonio with considerable energy. One sentence especially is a new note. Julia says, "War es edel, mich so weit zu bringen, dasz mir keine Wahl mehr blieb? War es auch nur stolz?"[99] This is a step beyond the statement in *Trauerspiel in Sicilien,* for the woman herself calls her lover to account for his treatment of her.

Julia experiences no struggle between her reawakened love and her duty to her rescuer. She is so serenely superior that one is inclined to think that Antonio may have reason for his jealousy of Bertram. One would like to see her sense of responsibility win a victory over her rebellious heart. In a drama of this kind where everything is told and explained quite directly she should have asides to show her feelings. This brings us to the most sweeping criticism of the character-delineation of the play. It is a step back and a long step. Compare the really fine use of indirect characterization in *Maria Magdalene* with this return to narrative style. In *Judith* and even in *Gen-*

[99] W. II: 178, 30 f.: cf. Böhrig, 4 ff. and Krumm, 300. Bastier (4, 8), thinks he sees in *Julia* the history of Hebbel's marriage. He seems to assume that the poet married Christine from pity, and to forget that the play was begun in Italy.

oveva the splendid fire and glowing diction of the long speeches are so thrilling in themselves that one forgives the self-characterization. Even in the *Trauerspiel in Sicilien* the sardonic humor in the dialogue between the soldiers redeems the defects to some extent. But in *Julia* there is little dramatic action and that little is continually interrupted by long explanations. First, Tobaldi tells of his connection with Grimaldi; then Bertram, how he came to be the physical wreck he is and how he took his chances on suicide; then Julia tells her story; then Tobaldi explains his unreasonable indignation at his daughter; and finally comes the last and longest narrative, the whole life history of Antonio. It is too much and becomes exceedingly wearisome.

Julia has so little unified individuality that it is easiest to describe her by showing in what respect she resembles other women in Hebbel's plays. Like Angiolina, she is running away from home; like Clara, she is suffering the torture of shame and desertion; like Genoveva, she has apathetic self-control. In comparing the play with *Maria Magdalene* many changes of conception are observable. The seducer receives the love to which his many noble qualities seem to entitle him. And Bertram forgives Julia's fall unconditionally; but he does not love her. His motive is to atone for his past by a deed of charity. It is no lover who cheerfully accepts such a situation.

Julia's fall is much more comprehensible than Clara's. She is surprised by a loved lover and threatened with what to her must be the most awful blow, to see her lover killed by her father.

The real hero of the play and the most interesting figure is Count Bertram,[100] who, in his sense of terrible guilt toward the moral law, sacrifices his personal right before death.[1]

The lover recalls earlier figures of Hebbel's robber-loving

[100] T. III: 3943, Jan. 47.

[1] This idea that a man may lose all right to happiness on this earth because of the wicked dissipation of his strength in forbidden pleasures was no new idea to Hebbel in 1847. As early as 1836, in a letter to Gravenhorst, he speaks of himself as "dem Tod anheim gefallen," and as not worthy of the love of a maiden soul. The same idea he developed still more in his short story, *Ein Leiden unserer Zeit*. Bastier (48f.) assumes that Hebbel in this passage was thinking of himself and his guilt toward Elise and her child.

youth in *Mirandola* and *Die Räuberbraut*. The character of Antonio interested Hebbel because he presented the problem of the individual born outside of society.[100]

Tobaldi is cold and stern as Anton and in addition is capable of making bitter jests in his misfortune, even when the dearly beloved daughter returns and shows all her love for him and the terrible suffering she is enduring. There is something diabolical in this that makes him seem a character too abnormal for a great play. Even more so are the two principal characters, Antonio, the robber, and Bertram, the debauchee. These two criminals, the one against the laws of man, and the other against those of nature, are so very noble, that the one condemns himself to a life of renunciation and the other to a death by accident. What the test with the pistols failed to bring about Bertram will cause by springing carelessly from rock to rock as he hunts chamois. Both men are possible, perhaps, but no one can deny that they are highly improbable.

Julia is vague, largely because she has in her some of the long-suffering Elise and yet in her independent treatment of Antonio at the end, a touch, too, of the freer Christine, who from now on is to be her husband's heroine. He had never before had a feeling for a woman worthy to be dignified by the word love. He had known passion often and in many different forms and degrees, but he had never come close to a woman whose personality wrung from him respect as well as admiration. In harmony with his own feelings, all of his plays from *Judith* to *Julia* take up the relations between man and woman from the physical, material side. Recall Judith, Holofernes and Ephraim, Golo, Genoveva and Siegfried, Clara, Leonhard and the secretary, Angiolina, Gregorio and Sebastiano, Julia, Antonio and Bertram. What do these ravishers and lovers desire? What but beauty and surrender? And what do the women ask? Nothing but the love of the man of their choice and the privilege of surrendering to him and not to another. Julia and Bertram are the only exceptions to this and they are both so unreal, so wavering in their opinions and characters, that one can only call

them exceptions in that they are transition figures, created during a period of shifting, uncertain ideals.

Herodes und Mariamne (1848)

Few, if any, poets have ever made a more sudden stride upward than did Hebbel between *Julia* and *Herodes und Mariamne*. Sure of himself at last after all the changes of his life, settled in a really happy home, the poet was able to see the "new light" with which he felt he closed all his later plays.[2] Here this new light is the appearance of the three kings symbolizing the hope of Christianity.

In December, 1846,[3] is the first mention of the tragedy which was to include all of Herod's life. The next spring,[4] the author still thought that the character of the king was to be "die ganze Bedeutung" of the drama. All references are about Herod and Joseph and their feelings,[5] until August, 1848, when we suddenly read, "The principal figure is not only written for my wife, but it is my wife."[6] In 1849, Hebbel criticised Massinger's *Ludovico* which[7] uses the material of Herod and Mariamne, and suggests a better method of treatment. He gave, as the primary motive of his own play, the murder of Aristobolus which makes Herod doubt his wife, who, the king thinks, would wish to take vengeance for her brother.

Thus Hebbel first thought of the play as the tragedy of a king, a political problem; but while he was working at it, Mariamne grew more and more important and the woman treated "als Sache" became the central figure, and not only that, but the most dramatic character in the play. As he wrote he saw Christine in the role till she gradually filled the stage for him and the other figures grouped themselves around her. And this was the case, in spite of the fact that the principal part of the play was written during the political tumult of the October revolution.

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[2] B. V: 55f. Sept. 52.
[3] T. III: 3837, Dec. 46.
[4] T. III: 4004, March, 47.
[5] B. IV: 63. Nov. 47, and 73 f., Dec. 47; T. III: 4334, Dec. 47.
[6] B. IV: 132, Aug. 48.
[7] W. XI: 247 ff. 1849.

Just as at the epoch which *Judith* opens, so here again we have a play with its scene laid in Palestine. Again we have a period in the history of the world when a political revolution is taking place and a religious conflict is imminent. Again we have a struggle between a man and a woman. But the political and religious elements have been placed in the background and the principal problem is purely social. Moreover, it is the woman who loses her life by the command of the man and yet she wins the real victory. Herod, like Judith, lives only to endure a suffering greater than any death.

From every possible standpoint, *Herodes und Mariamne* was an advance over Hebbel's recent plays but in nothing is this change so marked as in his view of woman. Here for the first time in his work, we have a real tragic heroine treated sympathetically. She is a woman built on a large mould with heroic lines. The daughter of a long line of proud kings, she is a match for any of them, even for the mighty founder of the race, Judas Maccabaeus himself. Yet she is none the less a woman endowed with such charms that even Cleopatra may be forgotten at the sight of her. More still, she loves as much as a woman can love. She is loyal to Herod till death, and beyond it. She feels she cannot live without him. From Hebbel's peculiar view of tragic guilt, the first cause of her undoing was just her extreme perfection. She has an excess of loveliness and so calls forth in Herod mad jealousy, which cannot let him rest until he is sure she will die when he does. And she would die, of that she is sure, but her pride is wounded that love should ask such an oath, and she refuses to take it. Thus a woman demands treatment as an individual with rights of her own and evidently with the full sympathy of the author. Not in vain had Hebbel been associated with a beautiful, proud woman, successful in the work she had chosen. A fair comparison may be drawn between Mariamne and Judith, the only really heroic woman Hebbel had depicted before. Both are Jewesses, both are beautiful and proud. But the pride of Judith, although it is but a secondary feeling to her great sense of a divine calling which drives her to her deed, is accounted by the author a deadly sin; while the pride of Mariamne, which is a primary motive

in her claim of consideration for herself, is a justifiable feeling. The problem, to be sure, is different because, as the instrument of God, Judith should not think of herself, whereas, in Mariamne, the religious element is omitted. The very alteration of the problem, however, indicates the change of attitude in the poet's mind. He is now thinking of the social position of woman and her claims to her own personality. Therefore, in Mariamne, woman is admitted to a place in the drama as a human being with a possibility of sinning as a man does. She is no longer a colorless, saintly Genoveva, nor a woman who sins by stepping out of her sphere, as does Judith, nor a being to be pushed out of the world, like Clara, but an individual with real rights. She is not a thing to be handled at the will of her owner, but a personality. We feel respect and admiration for her stubborn silence when she is asked to swear to die, if Herod does, and for the proud disdain with which she treats all accusations against her.

Like Siegfried and the secretary, Herod sins in failing to understand the fine nature which opens itself to him. The demon of jealousy is the explanation of this blindness on his part and, in addition, he is influenced by the sense of guilt which the assassination of Mariamne's brother has left in his heart. He expects vengeance and the very expectation brings it to pass. This is a very fine point of psychology and a natural view of the punishment of crime. But Mariamne never wavers in her loyalty. She loves Herod, she grieves for her brother and openly expresses her feelings, but she is incapable of deceit. Her anger is chiefly aroused against Herod because he appears in mourning and not in red after the murder. She will have none of this pretence. Married to Herod at the will of her grandfather and mother, she chooses to be a true wife and no masked enemy. In making Mariamne love Herod deeply, Hebbel departs from his source. Josephus emphasizes the hatred caused by the murder of her relatives.[8] This change of Hebbel's entirely alters the situation dramatically and lends to the character an added charm. The struggle between love

[8]Stephen Phillips has this same idea. Grack states that he acknowledged he was influenced by Hebbel.

and pride is far pleasanter to witness than a merely external fidelity founded on bitterness. One loves and pities Mariamne where she says that she must avoid talking of her brother's murder for fear that Herod make her see that, too, as right and desirable, like all the other things he does.

To a nature so strong and true, so conscious of fidelity, it is a terrible blow to be put under a sword like the veriest weakling and traitor, and that by the man who possesses the whole of her soul. "Das kann man thun, erleiden kann man's nicht."[9] "Ich war ihm nur ein Ding und weiter nichts."[10] And when this happens a second time,[11] in terrible agony of soul, she realizes that her whole life in the past has been a lie too. She knows that this seemingly perfect love was only external, and she cries, "Ich hatte nichts, ich habe nichts, ich werde nichts haben! War denn je ein Mensch so arm?"[12] And now Mariamne chooses death and indeed compels Herod to command it. Hebbel explained this by saying that Mariamne's love "borrows the form of hate at the end."[13] And he remarks that this is probably founded deep "in der weiblichen Natur," and that she wished what Herod wished of her, namely, that he might not live after her. This is human enough and comprehensible; but all of Mariamne's attitude at the end points to a much more primal motive. She cannot endure the conviction that she has not been truly loved by her husband. She realizes that she could never in the future trust him, for he would soon do the same thing again unless he could conquer the demon

[9] W. II: 219, v. 428.

[10] W. II: 267, v. 1382.

[11] B. IV: 217, May, 50.

[12] W. II: 305. vv. 2143 f. Here, as elsewhere in this play, the similarity of the problem to that of Ibsen's *Nora* has frequently been noted. Each sees, in her disillusionment, that the past too has been unlike her conception of it.

Critics differ in their judgment of this repetition of the order of death. Some see the necessity for it, (Zinkernagel, 158, Börnstein, 27) while Bulthaupt (169 f.) declares it is a theatrical if not a dramatic mistake. Pfeffer (103) thinks that it can only be explained by the reflective indecision of the characters, and Landau (52) considers it inartistic.

[13] T. III: 4701, May. 50, also B. IV: 217. Some critics consider that Mariamne dies because Herod does not respect her nature (Pfeffer, 53, Wiehr, 161). Lublinski (46) agrees, but thinks that it is not the human being but the woman in her that is fatally injured. Frenzel (385) objects to Mariamne's attitude on the ground that it is not historically true, as an oriental woman expects to die with her husband.

in his breast.[14] If he could have confidence in her, in spite of appearances against her, she believes that the demon would be exorcised and there would be love and mutual confidence for them; but if not, then she has but one desire, and that is death. So she risks all and the miracle does not happen. Thereupon she denies that it is courage but rather apathy with which she faces death.[15] She does not care to live. Yet she will not commit suicide because deep down in her heart she nourishes a tiny hope that all this seeming love and devotion in Herod is real enough to trust her, to understand her. So she dances her way to happiness or death. In the mouth of Titus, the unprejudiced Roman, Hebbel has put the final judgment of this heroine.

> "Sie wollte sterben und sie musste auch!
> Sie hat so viel gelitten und verziehen,
> Als sie zu leiden, zu verzeih'n vermogte;
> Ich habe in ihr Innerstes geschaut.
> Wer mehr verlangt, der had're nicht mit ihr,
> Er had're einzig mit den Elementen,
> Die sich nun einmal so in ihr gemischt,
> Dass sie nicht weiter konnte. Doch er zeige
> Mir auch das Weib, das weiter kam, als sie!"[16] [17]

Herod is kept well within the traditional character which he received in the old Christmas plays of the Middle Ages. He is a ranter still, though much softened, and frequently recalls Holofernes. One of the striking cases is where he longs to think

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[14] W. II: 349, 3030 ff. and 352, 3090 ff. Lublinski (37) considers Mariamne's demands for confidence as unreasonable as Herod's desire that she die with him. Her refusal to take the oath, he says, is caused by her desire to be revenged for the murder of her brother. Bulthaupt (167) says that her refusal to explain before Herod left the second time was not necessary and that Hebbel forces the misunderstanding between the two. Landau (52) and Grack (99) realize that this was caused by the natural desire on Mariamne's part to test Herod again.

[15] W. II: 347, 2973.

[16] W. II: 360, 3212 ff.

[17] The fact that Mariamne dances at the feast ordered on hearing that her husband has probably been killed by Octavius has been severely criticised. It is even thought impossible (Munz 77). Lublinski (42) says this deed was far worse than Judith's. They do not seem to have comprehended that Hebbel evidently intended Mariamne to believe Herod still alive in spite of the rumor.

he possesses the most glorious wife in the world and possesses her so entirely that she must die when he does, just because of the union between them. Hebbel also believed in this kind of love. Herod, however, would not think of applying the same rule to himself, which Hebbel has learned to do.[18] Herod's love is purely sensuous. He admires the beauty and charm of his wife but is incapable of appreciating the finer, nobler qualities she possesses. It is this lack of understanding which produces the tragedy, which is the tragedy.

Alexandra is the wily, diplomatic woman. She is inspired by but one idea, hatred of Herod and a desire to destroy him and put her own race on the throne again. For this, she will do anything, even to the extent of casting her daughter into the hands of Anthony, of making her a rival of Cleopatra. For she sends him the picture of Aristobolus with this in mind. She seems to think, however, that Mariamne can save herself when the time comes.[19] She is an instigator of rebellion and puts spies on Herod, but trusts in her power over him through Mariamne to escape the consequences of her actions. Her traditional desertion of her daughter is explained by Mariamne's own request and by Alexandra's desire to live longer for vengeance, rather than from any cowardly fear of death. Altogether, although a dreadful character, she is not a despicable one.

It has been suggested[20] that Hebbel was possibly thinking of Elise when he created the character of Salome. It seems plausible and nothing could more plainly show how Elise has fallen in his estimation. From a Genoveva, an ideal woman, to a pitiful, envious Salome, is a change indeed. Herod's unfortunate sister is homely, of low birth, unattractive and, like her brother, jealous. In Mariamne she is continually contrasted with a proud, high-born beauty, who wins all hearts without effort and

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[18] T. III: 3926, Jan. 47.

[19] W. II: 240, 849 ff. Grack thinks Alexandra a hateful character and an enemy of her own daughter (96 f.). Börnstein sees in her a leopard nature, Herod's equal in untamable hate and iron implacability, but not his match in statesmanship (18).

[20] Werner, *Hebbel,* 281.

scorns her husband's mother and sister, though she loves him.[21] In addition, it amuses the queen to fascinate poor, foolish Joseph, Salome's husband, just because Salome's miserable jealousy for so ridiculous an object strikes Mariamne as absurd and deserving of punishment. Poor Salome's inferiority is bad enough, but to have it made evident is worse. This explanation of her hatred of Mariamne prepares one for her exaggeration of any offences of which the queen may be guilty. She is finally convinced that Joseph is false to her, and in her overwrought state she half believes that Mariamne, too, has been untrue. She seems to love Joseph for she entreats not only Herod, but even Mariamne to spare his life.[22] When he is sent to death and Mariamne is allowed to live, her fury is quite pardonable; for, surely, if one was guilty, so was the other. Mariamne's terrible dance finally banishes any doubts she may previously have had.[23] And fully convinced of the absolute heartlessness of her rival, she comprehends that the only possible solution is Mariamne's death;[24] for Herod in his passion would forgive her even if guilty.

There has been nothing in any of Hebbel's previous work to compare with these three women. Alexandra and Salome, no less than Mariamne herself, are individuals with rights of their own to which they make claim. Mariamne is proud, noble, beautiful and is treated like a mere piece of property. Of necessity, she must rebel, and this is justifiable in Hebbel's eyes. Her guilt consists, not only in her too great loveliness, but also in her extreme pride. Alexandra, too, in the realm of politics is not entirely wrong. She is working against the usurper and is attempting to reinstate her own race on the throne. Her guilt consists in the deceit she uses to attain this end. Salome is no longer a mere envious maligner of beauty and charm, she has suffered wrong at the hands of Mariamne and imagines

[21] W. II: 330, 2625 ff.

[22] W. II: 283, 1727 ff.

[23] W. II: 321, 2433 ff. and 2446 ff.

[24] W. II: 354, 3121 ff. Börnstein (24) ascribes Salome's hatred of Mariamne entirely to envy and inferiority. Her accusations he calls base. Grack (97 f.) thinks she is trying to destroy Herod's domestic happiness and that Mariamne is gentle to her (88 f.).

that it is worse than it is. Her guilt, like her brother's, comes from her jealous disposition.

It will be noticed that these women are all tragic characters and that the same qualities would make them tragic whether they were men or women. In Hebbel's own description of Mariamne he never but once refers to her being a woman as a fact that would alter the tragic situation at all.[25] He puts her and Soemus on the same level as two individuals dear to Herod, who have been debased by being treated as things. No mention is made that the offence[26] is greater against the friend than the loved woman.[27]

Die Schauspielerin. (1848-1850)

It is perhaps more than doubtful that Hebbel was conscious that he had spiritualized the social problem in *Judith* when he wrote *Herodes und Mariamne,* but he must have been well aware that he was treating the theme of *Maria Magdalene* and *Julia* when he commenced work on the *Schauspielerin.* His later knowledge of a woman's feelings taught him that a sense of pollution would weigh her down, even though she was free from all external disgrace.[28] Here the direct inspiration of Christine is not to be denied.

Apart from the fact that the story is so near to real life as to take on almost the nature of a confession and so become painful to the reader, it is greatly to be regretted that Hebbel never finished this drama. In many respects, it might have proved his most modern production. One likes to think of it as a new *Maria Magdalene* grown finer, subtler, truer with the poet's better and nobler conception of womanhood. Here is a woman who feels a sense of shame, deep and sincere, because she

[25] T. III: 4701, May, 50.

[26] cf. *Genoveva,* where Hebbel takes the other attitude. See above p. 70.

[27] It is interesting to note the difference in opinion as to the fundamental trait of Mariamne's character. Some think her whole life is bound in love (Engel-Mitscherlich, 51-64, Börnstein, 18). Wiehr (161) implies it and so does Kerr (250) when he calls the play the greatest love drama of all times. Landau (53 f.), Frenzel (383), Treitschke (472) find her absolutely cold, unloving, and proud; whereas Grack (88f) says she is beautiful and feminine in character and not proud.

[28] cf. T. III: 3879, Jan. 47.

has belonged spiritually to a man who was unworthy. She has truly loved and trusted a libertine and now she scorns him and her own foolish heart. The heart she will punish by never trusting it again.[29] And she will take her revenge on his whole sex. She will bring to new life the Juliets and Cleopatras of the poets.[30] Into them she will pour blood from her own wounded heart and men shall believe her acting real and desire the lovely actress. But when they approach her with yearning love they are to find her as cold as a marble bust. In the first anguish of disillusionment this is not unnatural for a passionate woman whose tenderest sentiments have been treated as naught. She can trust no one and thinks of all men as like Edward, the lover who deceived her. He is the most dangerous form of rake, who pursues his victims with a genuine passion, and half believes in each case that he really intends to keep his promise of marriage.[31] But when he has attained his end, his passion dies and he coldly and heartlessly withdraws. Eugenie has retained her hold on his fancy because she escaped him, and for that reason only. This he shows when his pretended confession and claims of undying devotion are met with the scorn they deserve. Maddened by this, the first rebuff of his life, he threatens Eugenie that he will report that she is his, a claim which his reputation and their previous relations will make very plausible. From the fragments in existence it is evident that not he but Edmund, his witty friend, really makes the disclosure. And Edmund does not do it to hurt Eugenie, but because he doubts the story and thinks by proving Edward a boaster, to put him in an embarrassing position. Yet neither threat nor calumniation moves Eugenie except to make her despise men more than ever. Against ill-treatment and baseness she is proof. She can be won only by the man who can convince her that he feels deep, unselfish love for her. Such a man is Horst, who, when he hears of her supposed fall, promptly challenges the seducer and asks no reward for his act. He does it for himself, not for her. In such devotion, she has ceased

[29] W. V: 173, 25 ff.
[30] W. V: 167, 14 ff.
[31] W. V: 157, 10 ff.

to believe, but this convinces her and she gives him her heart. Before the duel she confesses that her anxiety is caused by love, "Liebe für Dich."[32]

Eugenie, like Mariamne, has given the pure gold of her love and received the dross of a man's passion. Like Judith, she was not only misunderstood but lowered in his eyes to a mere "Rauschmittel"; but she is a more modern woman and does not kill him nor force him to kill her. After she has escaped him, she bitterly plots vengeance on all men, until the faithful love of a true man cures her sick heart and gives her peace at last. Horst is the first true lover Hebbel ever painted, the first man capable of an unselfish devotion to a woman. He is ready to do what the secretary could not do until he had killed Leonhard, and what Count Bertram did from pity of Julia and a desire for suicide; but Horst is ready to do it, and more, from love.

Der Rubin (1849)

Before Hebbel finally abandoned the *Schauspielerin,* he laid it aside several times and, in the intervals, composed, among other things, his comedy, *Der Rubin.* Here in the midst of realistic figures such as the Caliph, Hakam, Soliman and the Cadi stands the only woman of the play. Fatima is merely a sketch, a dream of pure loveliness, a symbol of the ideal which Assad pursues, the highest good, which is only to be obtained by its renunciation.[33] "Wirf weg, damit Du nicht verlierst, ist die beste Lebensregel." In neither of the two short scenes in which she appears does she for a moment lose her symbolic character and become flesh and blood. Consequently she is of no importance as a study of Hebbel's treatment of female character.

Moloch (1849-1850)

Hebbel, like many other poets who have had the reputation of being free-thinkers, if not pagans, was deeply religious in his

[32] W. V: 178, 8.

[33] T. I: 442, Oct. 36. Kuh (*Leben* II: 382), criticizes the play because the fate and character of the heroine are so incredible. Poppe (84 ff.) has considered the comedy worthy of a long treatment, but he does not deal in particular with the character of the princess.

own way. This important factor of human life was by no means indifferent to him. He felt its potency and has scarcely written a play in which it is not an essential element. In *Judith, Genoveva, Herodes und Mariamne* it is very evident and even in *Maria Magdalene* and *Der Rubin* there are indications of it. But Hebbel wished to give expression to something greater and more fundamental. For years he cherished the ambition of presenting in a great musical drama the origin of the religious idea in a savage people. From what remains of this greatest of the fragments, *Moloch,* it is evident that religion is intended to be represented as a civilizing factor and one of such stupendous power that it sweeps away all who venture to use its holy name for personal and small ends. Moloch, the god of the Carthaginians, transferred to the Teutons to be used as an instrument of vengeance on the Romans, symbolizes religion, which civilizes the people and kills the priest who has made false claims. Wonderful old man though he is, he has failed to see the deepest significance of the weapon he uses.

Around the god, the real hero of the play, there gather the various characters of flesh and blood. Besides the priest, the two most important are young Teut and his father, the radical and the conservative, the believer in the new truth and the adherent to the old one. Through their conflict each learns from the other. The son realizes that he has worshipped dead bronze and the father sees the benefits that religion has brought to his land. That is, the one learns not to believe too quickly that the new is necessarily better, and the other, not to be too distrustful of it.

Of the two women who deserve attention, Velleda sides with her son. Like Hebbel's own mother,[34] this woman of a long forgotten period is given the vision which she does not understand of all the blossoms and fruit hidden in the earth. She obeys her instinct and gives her sympathy to her son, though her heart is torn by the inevitable struggle between the two men dearest to her. She has really nerved young Teut's hand for his victory

[34] cf. Werner, *Hebbel,* 112.

over his father when she taught him the legends of the people and so stirred his poetic mind.[35]

Theoda, on the other hand, sides with the father, but not from conviction. The cause is her love for Teut. He, with the traditional blindness of the strong and the dreamy, does not understand the passion which this child of nature has given him unasked. Her position is a new one. A wild creature, with all the fearless strength natural to a girl who can hunt the deer and support the old vanquished king in his voluntary exile, she has lost her heart to the strongest of all the young heroes. And he never notices her. The little scene where he tells of the things she did to attract his attention and she tries to explain it all away, is well done and shows insight into feminine nature. Teut, the dreamer, little suspects that his cool neglect is the cause of Theoda's fury. To him it appears hatred and not jealous rage, when she threatens to kill the girl who dares to smile on him.[36] Yet she is, through it all, tender and loving, always thinking of him when he is not there to see and hear her.[37] This spirited creature, who differs from Hebbel's other heroines in that she is not loved, reminds one of Käthchen, whom she resembles in that she is to win the lover she desires, though her method of winning him is as different as possible. Like Penthesilea, she fights the man who seems to scorn her, not with terrible dogs, however, but with her own sharp tongue and defiant manner.

Michel Angelo (1850).

That the continuation of the gloomy *Moloch* was due only to renewed productive energy is shown by the fact that, even as he was working on it, the poet was able to write his brightest play, *Michel Angelo*.[38] Here we are in real life. The comedy has the slight touch of sarcasm which the poet usually gave to

[35] W. V: 217, 414, ff. Petsch (223) states that the name Velleda was derived from that of a famous German seeress.

[36] W. V: 242, v. 815 ff.

[37] W. V: 220, 451 ff. and 221, 462 f. Petsch (228) cleverly characterizes Theoda as follows: "ein echtes Germanenkind mit backfischmässiger Entschiedenheit auf seiten der guten alten Sitte."

[38] Finished Dec. 50.

his humor, but the bitter tone so noticeable in the *Diamant* and the *Trauerspiel in Sicilien* has disappeared. Hebbel's own happy, cheerful life at this time is reflected in his work. He lightly laughs at the critics, who reverence only "what comes out of the earth", the works of art we have from the past. Hebbel said of the drama that it was "himmelblau", referring to its cheerful tone.[39]

There are no women in the play except as illustrations of the gay and varied street life in Rome. This is more a matter for regret as the characters of the men are well delineated. With the single exception of Barbara in the *Diamant,* who is somewhat humorous, there is no comic female character in Hebbel's plays. He seems to have regarded woman's faults and virtues in the light of serious facts, and has none of the genuine comic poet's eye for the foibles of woman, such as Kleist exhibited in his treatment of the mother in *Der zerbrochene Krug.*

Agnes Bernauer (1852)

Almost immediately after the completion of *Michel Angelo,* Hebbel revised *Genoveva.* He shortened it, prepared it for the stage, and wrote the *Nachspiel* with its "versöhnender Schluss."[40] Later in the year, he read in an old chronicle the story of Agnes Bernauer, who, to his mind, as surely died to save the state as Genoveva did for the salvation of human souls. Since the time of Hebbel's first stay in Hamburg, he had felt that the state should be considered before the individual.[41] Six years later, he thought of writing a drama, *Abraham's Sacrifice,* which should show the patriarch's struggle against his sense of duty before he heard the voice of the Lord.[42] In 1851, while he was writing *Agnes Bernauer* and afterwards, he said several times that the central thought was the relation of the individual to the state.[43] Twice he calls Agnes "the

[39] B. IV: 281 f. Apr. 51.
[40] Jan. 1851.
[41] W. IX: 30, 20 ff., 1835.
[42] T. II: 2315, March, 41.
[43] B. IV: 333, Dec. 51, also T. III: 4952.

modern Antigone", because, like the ancient heroine, she comes into conflict with the state by following her own sense of duty.[44] Yet he says, and it is plain to see in the drama itself, that his sympathy is with the old duke.[45]

Side by side with this political conception, there developed in the poet's mind the thought of the tragedy of beauty. In Rome [46] he planned such a tragedy and, in September, 1851, he spoke of his earlier plan and observed that *Agnes Bernauer* exactly carried it out.[47] After the play was finished, he saw that he had combined the two ideas, and shown how excess of beauty is dangerous, especially to a woman whose low rank excludes her from the throne she seems born to grace.[48]

Although the title is *Agnes Bernauer,* the political problem, rather than the tragedy of beauty, was the most interesting feature to Hebbel, and the hero was Duke Ernst.[45] Like the Abraham of the old plan, he is forced to sacrifice his dearly beloved son whom he disinherits in favor of his weakling nephew. When God speaks and the child dies, he even weighs the question as to whether he might not leave his kingdom to one of his two cousins, enemies though they are. But as this will bring ruin on the state, he decides there is but one thing to do, to sacrifice beautiful Agnes Bernauer. Although morally innocent, she has become dangerous for the state. This is "die ernste, bittere Lehre" of the tragedy, the debt which the individual owes to society. In this light, Agnes is a contrast to Clara, against whom society sins. Terrible as it is for the beautiful, noble individual, the state, as represented in Duke Ernst, is justified in demanding renunciation of Albrecht and Agnes, the prince and the girl of the people. Their marriage was a menace to society as constituted, and, beautiful as it was in itself, it had to be sacrificed. Society wrongs Clara, but Agnes must accept death as a just fate, and her husband, too, must

[44] B. IV: 341, Jan. 52; 350, Jan. 52.
[45] B. V: 205, Dec. 54.
[46] T. III: 3286; W. V: 127; cf. T. III: 3289, Jan. 45.
[47] T. III: 4941, Sept. 51.
[48] B. IV: 349 f. Jan. 52.

submit and endure life's hard, lonely duties. Hebbel, as he grew older, became less radical, as most men do.[49]

Agnes is the most striking example of Hebbel's well-known, peculiar idea of tragic guilt. She is guilty in nothing except in her absolute perfection. Undramatic as this conception of guilt is, and difficult as it is to delineate such a character, Hebbel has given her tangible form and life by showing the development from the simple Bader's daughter to the duchess. Agnes's patience with poor jealous Barbara helps to give us a conception of the perfect beauty and naive simplicity of character which form the crowning glory of her splendid physical charms. We are made to see that such loveliness condemns to isolation as completely as does the rank of royalty. Women hate her, men fight for her, and no one is simply her friend. When she is captivated by the duke, we are never allowed to fancy that she is dazzled by his position; that frightens her, simple-minded child that she is. But he is a young girl's dream of a knight, brave, passionate, handsome and winning. He has been compared to the Prinz von Homburg and there is much resemblance between them both in character and fate.

Agnes is proud and pure, and feels herself too good to be the mistress of any man. She does not understand all the dangers of the position she takes, but she must take it or be degraded in her own eyes. Her piety is shown in the prayer at Vohburg at the shrine of the late duchess, and her gentle humility by the rejection of the jewels found there. When Albrecht hands them

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[49] This close where the fiery prince is suddenly calmed by being made his father's judge has been regarded very unfavorably. (Friedmann, 184 f.; Ludwig, *Shakespeare-Studien*, 67 f.; Bulthaupt, 174 f.; Pfeffer, 26 f.; Munz, 62 f.; who quotes Gervinus, Lemmermeyer and Uechtritz as agreeing with him). Dramatic mistake it may be, but the presence of the scene shows how deeply Hebbel was interested in the political problem he presents. He felt that his point was made strongest by causing Albrecht, the greatest sufferer, to see the justice of his father's decision. A "versöhnender Schluss" was also necessary in the poet's mind and this reconciliation seemed to him to fulfil this requirement. Krumm (301) says that the critics quoted above are "rührselig" and that Hebbel is right. Walzel (68) sees onesidedness on the part of both father and son, and recognizes Hebbel's ability to see both sides as one of his most marked characteristics.

[50] W. III: 186, 9 ff.

to her, she asks, "What is there left for princesses?"[50] It is interesting to compare this with Mariamne's proud statement:

"Ich darf
Vom Edelstein, wie Cleopatra, sagen:
Er ist mein Diener, dem ich es verzeihe,
Dasz er den Stern so schlecht bei mir vertritt."[51]

Here similar words are put more becomingly in the mouth of Albrecht. Later, she seems more of a duchess when we find her ordering a chapel for her burial vault. She has not forgotten her humble birth and still reminds her husband of it, but she has "almost" learned to refuse to give charity, and has entirely learned to accept the state of royalty as part of her life. But her full pride is never developed until, in the hour of death, she hurls defiance at Duke Ernst and her judge, and refuses to be touched by any but the grave digger. Her acceptance of her fate in preference to proving unworthy of her love adds the last jewel to her crown and she belongs in the vaults of royalty by right of sufferings endured as a sacrifice to its traditions.

Agnes has many sweet, womanly traits, such as her shrinking from the sight of those who die for her, her continued love and interest in her father and her great desire to see him, her friendly feeling toward Theobald and the sweet simplicity with which she greets him when he comes to Straubing.

To Mariamne, the new Judith, and Eugenie, the new Clara, we now have added Agnes, the new Genoveva. And just as Mariamne and Eugenie are infinitely nobler, finer and truer than Judith and Clara, so is Agnes than Genoveva. The pale phantom, with its discomforting, colorless endurance, has given place to a victim just as innocent, but one that fights for life and love, and only yields one to be true to the other.[52]

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[50] W. II: 214, v. 314ff.

[52] Agnes has charmed most critics by her beauty and sweetness. Pfeffer (64 ff.) considers her character and Albrecht's excellently delineated. She follows duty and honor as well as love. Indeed, she would be willing to renounce Albrecht, but not his good opinion of her. Walzel (67) says that in no other of Hebbel's dramas does the conflict between different views of life seem so necessary, so inevitable, nor so clearly conditional on the time of the action. Wiehr (81 f.) and Kreisler (12) take the position that Agnes' death is unnecessary.

Christian II oder der Böse (1851)

As Hebbel was writing that scene in *Agnes Bernauer* where Albrecht comes to her home and marries her, he possibly thought of how different the result would be if Agnes were different. Thereupon he wrote a plan for a travesty of his own play, in which she is different. The king sees Dyveke, the daughter of an apple-woman, falls in love with her, immediately takes her to his palace and allows her to rule in his stead, while he cares for the kitchen. She is poisoned by the jealous nobles, but her ghost appears and plans as her revenge to incite the king to the Stockholm bath of blood. In the fourth act the king comes in full war array, empties the blood out of his boots and is about to hasten back to cut off Steen Sture's ears, when he suddenly gets podagra as a result of having wet feet. In the fifth act the king is incarcerated in a tower on which is sitting Nemesis dangling her feet and warning the public to beware of a like fate. In the intervals of her speech the king roars.

Dyveke is much more like Grillparzer's Rahel than like Agnes. But it is evident that nothing was to have been taken seriously in this travesty. Interesting is the touch that the apple-woman's daughter rules the kingdom while the king cares for the kitchen. There is apparently a double hit in this at the democratic notions of the times and at the political emancipation of woman.

Gyges und sein Ring (1854)

After the completion of *Agnes Bernauer,* followed nearly three years when Hebbel had much to occupy him outside of actual production. He went to Munich to see the first performance of his play, edited Feuchtersleben's works, endured many vexations in connection with the presentation of his *Genoveva* in Vienna and was quite ill. But at last, in 1854, *Gyges* was finished.

When the story of Herodotus was called to his attention, he was immediately attracted by the beauty of the legend. Unlike his other plays, Gyges was written purely from the anec-

dotic standpoint. Only after it was completed did he discover, to his surprise, that the central thought is "Sitte", as that which conditions and binds everything.[53] This explains the statement that the real significance of the piece lies in the character of Kandaules,[54] who does not sufficiently respect "Sitte". He is a strong man with no petty feelings in his heart, but he is not content to have the greatest joys of life. He must also be envied for them. He longs to wipe away foolish traditions and superstitions and live in the light of the clearer vision. But he tries, all too rudely, to do away with the old customs of his people, and in like manner, to lift the veil that covers his wife. And he must suffer for both mistakes; for the first with the loss of his kingdom; for the second, with the loss of his life.

Gyges is first of all a Greek. As such, he has the wonderful sense of proportion and harmony of his race. Therefore, he respects custom but is not slavishly bound by it. Not only in all matters of art, but also in feats of strength and dexterity, he easily surpasses the Lydians. He wisely sees that the supernatural power of the ring is dangerous to an ordinary mortal, and refrains from making use of it. And although he is finally persuaded to violate his principles and pay the nocturnal visit to Rhodope's room, the sight of her unveiled loveliness awakens him at once to the enormity of his offence, and he turns the ring so as to force the king to kill him. Later, he offers his life as a sacrifice, and finally leaves Lydia, only to be brought back by Rhodope. Even then, with loyal love for Kandaules, he tries to take all the blame on himself so as to spare both king and queen. And he would have succeeded had not the king been noble and true too. Rhodope feels that Gyges has this remarkable sensitiveness and, contrasting him with Kandaules, she says,

> "Du hättest mich der Heimath nicht entführt,
> Um so an mir zu thun."[55]

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[53] B. V: 204, Dec. 54.
[54] B. V: 291 f., Dec. 55.
[55] W. III: 323, 1585f.

Rhodope, on the contrary, is the slave of custom. Christine once described her very aptly as being "lauter Schleier."[56] She is illusive and rather hard to characterize. As a dreamer, shut out from the world, she reminds one of Grillparzer's Libussa, whose undoing it was to come into contact with the realities of life. Rhodope, however, is no mysterious being with superhuman qualities, but just a woman with no longing for the world, and with a nature so easily injured that the pollution of a man's gaze means death to her.[57] She is every inch a queen in her dealings with her attendants, gracious and kindly, but demanding obedience. She is keen-eyed, and can be deceived by neither Kandaules nor Gyges. But she is a creature exquisitely ethereal and unlike other women. She knows no passions, except love, and she does not feel this in any intense way. Kandaules is her dear friend, but she scarcely seems his wife. There is a certain indestructible virginity about her that has a strange charm. And her sense of purity, symbolized by the veil, that is almost a part of herself, is the very essence of her being. Even the fact that a stranger had seen her suffices to wither the delicate bloom of her spotless soul, and for her there is nothing but death. The woman who is not spotless must die, according to the law of her people, and now she understands the reason for this law. "Sie kann nicht leben, und sie will's auch nicht."[58] This one absorbing instinct in her otherwise calm, serene nature makes the gentle creature an inexorable judge of the two men who have violated her sense of chastity. When she has at last comprehended that Kandaules could actually allow Gyges to see her, all the bitterness of feeling, which before was vented on the supposed criminal, turns to the real one, to the husband who could so expose her to another's eye, and she sentences both. Gyges is to kill Kandaules and then marry her; but she evidently intended from the first that this marriage was to be only one of form and that death should also be her lot. It has been thought that Rhodope is entirely unnatural in that she considers her

[56] B. V: 266f., Mar. 55.
[57] W. III: 262, 454f.
[58] W. III: 308, 1273.

death and Kandaules's the only possible consequence of this apparently slight sin against her.[59] But Hebbel's position can be defended. This is a drama with mythological elements. Its very center is the ring which renders its wearer invisible. We are dealing with a descendant of Hercules and all such things are to be taken literally. Here Hebbel has at last carried out his long cherished dream. Since the days when he wrote *Der Diamant* with a fairy princess as heroine whom he tried to bring into a real world of everyday, this dream has been approaching nearer and nearer to fulfilment. In the *Rubin* it is much better done, the two worlds are growing closer together, and now in *Gyges,* the poet has achieved his end.[60] We must put ourselves with absolute faith back into this world of magic rings and lovely, dreamy heroines. Yet, once there, we find this a very every day and modern world. Here are men and women who love, transgress, and suffer as we do. Rhodope claims, with most modern determination, the right of individuality. She and her view of things must be accepted absolutely. Her character is to be taken for granted with other mythological elements and then the psychology is unimpeachable.

The two slaves, attendants of the queen, are figures of minor importance. Hero is a young girl with all the curiosity natural to her secluded life, who climbs the tree to see something out-

[59] Treitschke, 568, Böhrig, 60f., Berger, 208ff., Bamberg, Bw., 340.

Rhodope's unveiling is not to be understood in the sense of the ancient story, nor of Professor Goebel's interpretation in the *Journal of English and Germanic Phil.*, VIII, 451 ff. Quite early in the play, Rhodope says that no man has ever seen her except her father and her husband (v. 437, cf. v. 1206). She also refers to the songs of her nurse, who in the very cradle taught her that the face of man was death to her (v. 455). And at the end, where Kandaules gives the central thought of the play (vv. 1809ff.), he speaks of "veils and crowns and rusty swords" together as emblems of conservatism. It is absurd to assume that Hebbel would use the unveiling in the old brutal sense, and then venture to speak of it as something the wor'd would outgrow, just as it has left behind exaggerated reverence for the ancient symbols of sovereignty.

As for the statement (Goebel, 452) that the more delicate intepretation would be a proof of Rhodope's prudery, that is like saying that the Turkish woman of to-day, who has a similar feeling in regard to the unveiled face, is prudish. Such things are not a matter of reason, but of feeling, and come from generations of training. And Hebbel has taken great pains to emphasize the fact that Rhodope is more of an oriental than even the Lydians. The whole scene with her maids shows this, and also her frequent allusions to her home. Kandaules sins against his wife by venturing to decide againt her will what is fitting for her, and it remains a sin, even though his view is more reasonable than hers.

[60] T. III: 4102, Mar. 47; 3876, Jan. 47; B. VII: 304, Feb. 63.

side and slyly alludes to Lesbia's passion for Gyges and his evident attraction to her. Lesbia is the favorite slave of the queen, her devoted admirer and friend. She loves the sweet peace of her sheltered life with Rhodope, yet she longs, too, for just a little of the great world beyond. Her heart has gone out to the beautiful Greek, and she goes, trembling, yet happy, as a gift to him. But when he scorns her, and gives her, instead of love, her freedom, she shows her heartache in her perfunctory words of thanks. She is very sweet, gentle and dignified, and so well characterized as to be worthy of a more prominent place in the drama.

Rhodope's tragic fate may profitably be compared with that of the other heroines who have been violated by the passions of men. Clara surrenders herself to an unloved man, and uncomplainingly dies. Julia yields to a man she loves and calls him to account for his treatment of her. Eugenie feels ashamed that she spiritually surrendered to a scoundrel, and takes vengeance on all men for his wrong-doing. Rhodope cannot endure even the pollution of a glance from a man, and washes away the stain with the blood of Kandaules and her own. Thus each time the offence is less and the punishment greater. Woman's right to her own body is growing more and more sacred in Hebbel's eyes.

Rhodope is a creature of finer mould than other women, apparently without physical passion. She is almost pure spirit. Yet she is no longer, like Wilhelmine and Fatime, a symbol rather than an individual. She has all the complicated personality of a modern woman penetrated with an exquisite remoteness from the commonplace. She is all harmony from an instrument so delicately strung that a breath can alter the perfect accord and destroy the music.[61]

[61] Although most critics find Rhodope exceedingly sensitive, some consider her too coldly critical, too reasonable in her solution of the problem (Bulthaupt, 179; Munz, 78ff.). Pfeffer (79) seems to share this opinion to some extent, but he admires Hebbel's masterly delineation of characters of this kind. She seems to him (80) milder than Mariamne and to demand consideration more justly, because she gives more of herself and her love to her husband. He asserts that her dreamy traits are a late addition and not entirely consistent with the rest of her character. He thinks they are more a real part of Agnes than of Rhodope.

Vier Nationen unter einem Dache (1854?)

The summer following the publication of *Gyges* was spent in Gmünden where Hebbel learned more and more to enjoy the aspects of nature. It was probably less the country than the peace which was settling on his own soul that made this possible. The place became dear to him and he afterwards bought and thoroughly enjoyed a small home there. In the fall he began *Mutter und Kind,* and *Die Nibelungen* and prepared for a complete edition of his poems.

Though the date is uncertain it is possible that the plan for the comedy, *Vier Nationen unter einem Dache* was made in the year 1854, or shortly afterwards. The way the German allows himself to be pushed out of his place by all the other nationalities is the real point of the little play; but Hebbel intended to make the daughter of the host the center of the whole, in that each was to make love to her in his own way.[62] She hardly appears in the fragment at all, and so is not developed. The only point of interest for us is the mention of Valentin's mother, who was the cause of his being able to be a painter. This was evidently suggested by Hebbel's own history and is a fine testimonial to the patient, long-suffering mother to whom he owed so much. Another little tribute to mothers in general is, "Niemand bekommt seinen Vater zu seh'n, so lange die Mutter noch neben ihm steht."[63]

Der Steinwurf (1858)

In 1858, while continuing the *Nibelungen* Hebbel wrote the text of an opera for Rubinstein. The characters are rather dim and pale creations, but there is more life in them than is usually found in the characters of an opera.

The interesting character in the play is Rabbi Löw, the wise, much loved Jew of Prague. Hebbel says that he was compelled by the composer to use the two foolish ideas of mad love on the Rabbi's part for Libussa and on Anna's for him.[64] Considering

[62] W. V: 297, 10 ff.
[63] W. V: 290, 2 ff.
[64] B. VI: 191f., Aug. 58.

that fact, one must congratulate the poet on the delicate way he has handled the two motives. Both seem driven on irresistibly, almost as Käthchen is, though the motive is kept subordinate in each case. Although the Rabbi confesses the crime from disappointed love, he is willing to accept the consequences of his confession because he loves his people. Anna is impelled not only by her hopeless love, but also by a sense of justice. The innocent must not suffer. As she cannot accuse her brother, though he is guilty, she claims to have done the deed herself. Touching is her, "Hab' nur Geduld! Es fällt mir noch wohl ein,"[65] when she is asked her reason for throwing the stone. She had not thought of that and was not prepared. An equal proof of her innocence lies in the naive remark she adds when assenting to Joel's suggestion, "Es galt gewiss der Juden-Plünderung." She says, "So war es, Herr, ich bin so schlecht, als jung."[66] Her choice of death is also explained, where she quotes the Rabbi, "Lamm und Tiger können hausen, Aber Christ und Jude nicht!" and adds, "Kann es mir vor'm Tode grausen, Der mein Herz nur einmal bricht?"[67]

Libussa is the typical, cold-hearted beauty whose external charms dazzle the enthusiastic hero only to chill his heart. But the poet redeems her character in the end, by making her plead, and successfully, for Anna and her wicked brother.[68] Ludmilla is simply to lighten the dialogue. She has no characteristics of interest.

Verkleidungen (1858)

About the same time, Hebbel wrote his charming, playful comedy *Verkleidungen*. It is a play for children with no great study of character. The comedy breathes an atmosphere of homelike peace, however, that rejoices the student who has lived with Hebbel through all the tragic gloom of his early life. One feels that it was a proud, happy father, who wrote the little play—as a birthday surprise for himself.

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[65] W. III: 385, v. 694 ff.
[66] W. III: 385, v. 695 f.
[67] W. III: 386, v. 711 ff.
[68] W. III: 389, v. 745 ff.

Die Nibelungen (1860)

Hebbel was an ardent admirer of the *Nibelungenlied* from the day he was left alone in Amalie Schoppe's garden and read a copy of the poem he found lying on the table. The splendid tragic story appealed to his dramatic instinct and the sturdy, obstinate old warriors spoke to the kindred spirit in him. Vischer's warning[69] long kept him from attempting to dramatize the epic. But when in 1847,[70] he saw his wife Christine as Kriemhild in Raupach's *Nibelungenhort,* he was impressed anew with all the dramatic possibilities of the powerful character.[71] He noted the gradual change from the quiet, gentle girl who never laughed but was always cheerful, to the terrible, unsmiling queen of the Huns who can think of but one thing, "Und Hagen lebt,"[72] when the death of so many heroes is announced to her. After Christine had thus lent her a form, she became more and more a living person to Hebbel and when he finally heard her speak to him,[73] it must have been with the voice of his wife.

At last, in 1855, after a summer spent in Gmünden with Wilhelm Gärtner, who believed that a play was possible with these Germanic Titans for heroes, Hebbel returned to Vienna and began the trilogy, at which he continued to work at intervals until March 22, 1860, when it was finally completed.

He claimed no credit for the tragedy except as the interpreter of a greater poet.[74] But there is and must be much credit due to any one who can interpret a great poem of the past and make it live again for us on the stage. It is in the characterization that the work of Hebbel lies. These heroic men and women are influenced by motives which we can still comprehend. It is by far the most difficult subject which Hebbel ever undertook and, much as it has been criticized, it is remarkably successful. Though the whole story is capable of a purely human treatment,

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[69] *Krit. Gänge,* II, 399 ff., 1844.
[70] T. III: 4244, Aug. 47.
[71] W. XII: 20, 1853.
[72] W. IV: 316, v. 5053 ff.
[73] T. IV: 5396, Oct. 55.
[74] B. VII: 31, Mar. 61.

where no invulnerable hero, no daughter of a god, no dragons and dwarfs appear, Hebbel rightly felt that, in taking out these features, one avoids the greatest difficulty and writes a great drama, perhaps, but not the *Nibelungenlied.* That was exactly what happened when Ibsen wrote his *Vikings at Helgoland* (1858), of whose existence Hebbel probably never knew. Yet our poet could not possibly write any tragedy without being chiefly interested in the purely human development. He again mingled mythological elements with a psychological treatment which developed all the guilt from the characters themselves.[75]

The center of the whole dramatic action is occupied by the two contrasted figures of Siegfried and Hagen. Different as they are, both must be destroyed for the same ultimate reason. This reason Hebbel himself gives in a quotation from Solger's *Ajax*:

> "Denn übermässige Leiber und unmenschliche
> Sind stets verhasst den Göttern."[76]

From the moment when Siegfried bathed in the dragon's blood, his fate was sealed and with it the fates of all the rest. Through this bath he attained to superhuman powers and was, therefore, the man destined to free and subdue Brunhild. And he does free her from the walls of encircling flame but wears the Tarnkappe so that he is not seen. Her sombre, splendid beauty does not appeal to his sunny nature, her prowess in arms is repellant to him. The tender, gentle type of woman is more attractive to him and calls him south. By thus abandoning Brunhild, Siegfried adds to the tragic guilt he has incurred by his invulnerability. More evident is his later guilt of deceit. Brunhild is destined for the strongest, not for the man in whose service he acts. But when Siegfried has twice deceived her, he makes matters still worse by telling Kriemhild the secret.[77] Now Siegfried's guilt is complete. No amount of no-

[75] T. IV: 5933, Aug. 61; B. VII: 69, 20 f., Sept. 61; 163, 10 f. Apr. 62.

[76] B. VI: 298 ff., Dec. 59.

[77] Hebbel has handled most skilfully the scene where Siegfried finds himself forced to tell his wife the dangerous secret in order to quiet the suspicion he has aroused by his confusion at the sight of the girdle. But in spite of all this skill, Wiehr (162) and Weitbrecht (15) are unconvinced, and think that Siegfried behaves shamefully and deceives basely.

bility of character or intention can free him from the consequences. He must die for all his splendor and strength, at the hands of the gloomy Hagen.

True to his dramatic convictions, Hebbel has not conceived Hagen as a villain any more than he has Siegfried as a blameless hero. He is the necessary avenger of the crime. In Hagen's eyes, Siegfried's wrong doing consisted in his inability to escape the necessity of telling the whole truth. He has lacked diplomacy and so he must die to save Brunhild. For two reasons she must be saved, first, she is enduring undeserved shame, and, second, she is Gunther's wife. The great key to Hagen's character is loyalty to his lord. There is nothing he would not do for him. The most touching evidence of this is one of his last acts. When Gunther, weary and faint from the terrible conflict, looks for a chair on which to rest, his faithful kinsman falls on his hands and knees: "Hier, edler König, hier, und einer, der Dir selbst sogar gehört."[78] Envy of Siegfried cannot possibly be considered his principal motive. He enjoys the task for that reason, and would fight with any man who tried to take it from him, but the deed itself is to him necessary. He is never ashamed of it, nor of any other deed. He always acts boldly and with the conviction that justice is on his side. Even his cruelty and ferocity are so much a part of him that one feels constrained to accept them as inevitable like the implacability of the laws of nature.

Hebbel's most difficult task in the dramatization was Brunhild, who seemed to him like a half-written hieroglyphic.[79] This mysterious being is a combination of Valkyrie, Norne, and earth-born woman. As Valkyrie, she possesses superhuman strength and the instinct to protect her chastity with sword and spear. As Norne she is a prophetess and sees in a vision her own possible future. As woman, like the Brunhild of the epic, she is unconscious that these powers are supernatural. She is as much a riddle to herself as to others. Frigga tells her of her strange

[78] W. IV: 334, 5419 f.

[79] B. V: 349, Nov. 56. Miss Periam (172) notes that this conception of Brunhild is based on Vischer's advice to make her a human woman with reminders of her early origin.

coming to them, but neither maid nor mistress seems to realize that it is the Wanderer himself who put this heathen child in the place of the little Christian. Brunhild knows but one thing, that she must be overcome only by the strongest. That this strongest has seen her and passed her by she does not suspect. But when he returns with Gunther, she at once feels who he is and addresses her first mocking words to him. Always Gunther remains a secondary figure to her, and when she finds that he is her opponent she is proudly sure of victory, and laughingly swears to follow them at once if he conquers. In the same breath she orders a nail put in the hall of trophies on which to hang the armour of this latest wooer.[80]

When the impossible has happened and she is defeated, she keeps her word, but she is not yet overcome. When Gunther tries to kiss her and fails, in fury she brushes him aside, and later she tells him and Ute his fate. She will follow him, she will enter the cathedral and be called his wife, but never, till he can master her, will she really be his.[81] Now Siegfried must finish what he has begun. He has no choice. Gunther is disgraced if Brunhild is not subdued. The ugly affair must be closed, once for all. "Magic arts began it and magic arts must end it," as Hagen says.[82]

Brunhild seems most like a normal woman when she first appears at the court and is met by Ute and Kriemhild. She approaches them with a certain gentle sadness, in strange contrast to her fury against Gunther. She seems to be willing to receive them as sister and mother and desirous of growing accustomed to their land with its blue sky, its excessive light, and its bright, fragrant flowers. She is glad to believe that her last glorious vision referred to beautiful Burgundy. But she cannot yield Siegfried to this new sister. She appears to be dimly conscious that he is her true mate, and resents the thought that any other woman should possess him. Hagen has well characterized the nature of Brunhild's love for Siegfried.

[80] W. IV: 60, 937 ff.

[81] W. IV: 69, 1075 ff.; 79, 1237 ff. Several critics consider Brunhild's behavior toward Gunther so exaggerated as to be ridiculous (Wiehr, 113; Meinck, 53 ff.; Weitbrecht, 22; Gnad, 172).

[82] W. IV: 86, 1363 f.

After saying that her hate has its foundation in love, he goes on to explain that it is not the love that binds man and woman, but that magic which drives the last giantess, without desire and without choice, to the last giant.[83] But love it is, terrible, fateful, ineradicable, which induces her first to object to his marriage to Kriemhild, and then to hasten his departure. She has silenced her doubts and is trying to believe that Gunther is really stronger than he. And the Valkyrie is dead. She is overcome and can no more struggle if she willed it, and no longer wills it. But there is still a stern woman in this strange being. When her jealous rage overcomes her, and she asks Gunther to kill Siegfried, simply because he looks so strong that she addressed him first, she demands what she considers her right. As a woman who has given most in becoming a wife, she claims the privilege of the strongest husband. She says to Gunther:

"In Dir und mir
Hat Mann und Weib für alle Ewigkeit
Den letzten Kampf um's Vorrecht ausgekämpft.
Du bist der Sieger, und ich ford're Nichts,
Als dass Du Dich nun selbst mit all den Ehren
Wonach ich geizte, schmüken sollst."[84]

But all this is simply prologue to the great catastrophe where the two queens, both loving the same man, one beloved, the other scorned, meet and cast bitter words at each other. The characters of the two women are well contrasted by their manner of quarreling. Brunhild is unconscious of danger and direct in her attack. Kriemhild knows the perilous secret, and yet, by insinuations, ventures nearer and nearer to it until it is told. This involves her in tragic guilt and dissipates Brunhild's lingering hopes. She realizes that she has been scorned, and pays

[83] W. IV: 134, v. 2161 ff. This conception has been considered a mistake on Hebbel's part, as it tends to lessen the dignity of Brunhild's tragic fate (Rehorn, 141; Wiehr, 162; Woerner, 80; Meinck, 33).

[84] W. IV: 99, 1565 ff. Berg (*Sexuelle Prob.* etc. 31) implies that it was really only a "Vorgefecht." Frau Engel-Mitscherlich (114) takes the view that Brunhild does not love Siegfried and that her reason for opposing his union with Kriemhild is the one she gives. So far as I know this view is held by no one else.

no attention to Frigga's tale of power lost. For her there is but one shame and one jealous rage; Siegfried has preferred Kriemhild. When Kriemhild tries to comfort her with the thought that she is now Gunther's whom she loves, Brunhild says but one word, "Oh." But there is an inexpressible depth of anguish in that monosyllable. Until she has been assured that Siegfried shall die she does not speak again. Then she states simply, "Ich ess' nicht mehr, bis ihr den Spruch vollzieht." But to Frigga she can tell all her woe. She was not only scorned, she was given away. Too insignificant to be his wife, she was the price he paid to win another. It is worse than murder. Here is the old cry of Mariamne and Rhodope. The position is altered, but it is the claim of a woman to be regarded as a personality. Siegfried does not love her. She has no claim except that of her love for him and her human right. The fact that he is ignorant of her love cannot alter her attitude. She feels it was her right to be loved by the strongest. But if he could not give her love, she should at least have been allowed to enjoy the lonely grandeur which her dream promised her. Not even that did he grant her, but transformed her to an ordinary woman and gave her to his inferior. Of course she demands his death. She must. He has sinned against her and he must die or she will. And she does really die a spiritual death. Never but once does she arouse from the apathy which follows the murder of Siegfried, and then her curses on his murderers are even more terrible than Kriemhild's. When told that she herself demanded his death, she hurls the wine in Gunther's face with a terrible laugh. After this one expression of her overwhelming grief, she gives no sign of joy or pain until Kriemhild goes to be Attila's wife. Then in the night she goes to Siegfried's tomb, cowers weeping by the coffin, digging her nails into her face and into the wood which covers him. Nor can she be induced by any threats to leave her place. She loves now and lives only in the memory of the dead hero. Like Judith, she realizes that she has killed the first and last man the world has produced.[85]

[85] This conception of Brunhild is, for the most part, little understood and less liked. As Miss Perlam (172) puts it, she is "the least convincing" of the

Kriemhild's evolution is entirely different. She appears first as a sweet, gentle, inexperienced girl and blossoms into womanhood through love. The murder of her beloved becomes a wrong done to her through this deepest feeling in her nature. The fact that this wrong remains unpunished gnaws at her soul and develops her step by step till she is a veritable fury. But this change takes place so gradually that it seems entirely natural.

The first harsh feeling enters her gentle soul, when she encounters Brunhild after knowing of Siegfried's relation to her. In her jealousy [86] she allows herself to be tempted into telling the queen the cruel secret which she knows will crush her pride forever. After this she feels her own guilt and fears that Brunhild will take vengeance on her. This explains Kriemhild's terror when the false alarm of a coming battle is reported to her. She eagerly grasps at Hagen's proffered help, and marks the vulnerable spot for him. Thus she has sinned twice in the same way, in betraying the secret entrusted to her. And this second offence is even more disastrous than the first. Siegfried must die for his guilt and hers, especially since she lacks the courage to tell what she has done, and thus put her husband on his guard.

The first great change in Kriemhild comes when she finds Siegfried lying dead in her doorway. She flames up into terrible wrath and grief, claims justice and threatens vengeance. But at the opening of the third part of the trilogy she is peacefully weeping at Siegfried's grave, and is not even roused to anger by being robbed of her treasure. She is patiently waiting to inflict punishment on her enemy until her son is able to perform the task for her. At last she learns that Hagen objects to her marriage with Attila and, at once, she sees that this is the road leading to a safer and speedier vengeance. Yet even after she has obtained from Rüdeger a promise of assistance, she hesitates, until she has once more demanded justice against

characters. (cf. Meinck, 33, Frenzel, 34). Weitbrecht finds her mannish. Gnad (88) considers her the center of the play, as the injured woman. But he, like the rest, is displeased with the problematic element in her character.

[86] W. IV: 129, 2058 ff.

Hagen. She consents to this shameful marriage only when it appeals to her as her last resort. Convinced that this is the price she must pay for revenge, she is resolved. Interesting is her point of view in regard to woman's position as a queen. She says, "A kingdom is little or much. How is it divided in your country? To the man, the sword, the crown and the sceptre, to the wife, the tinsel, the embroidered gown? No, no, I need more."[87] And Rüdeger promises her more, his absolute devotion, his support in any undertaking against her enemies. He feels safe in making this promise because he thinks that any woman satisfies her rage by making bloody plans and is weak in their execution.[88] He is destined to be surprised by the woman before him. But since Rüdeger has given her this promise, and since she knows that Attila is the mightiest living hero, Kriemhild accepts the offer. But her reward is long in coming. Gunther does not pay the promised visit and she is forced to send an invitation, omitting Hagen, but confident that he will come. Even yet she does not grasp the situation. She thinks that she can kill Hagen and leave her brothers alive. She is to learn that they, who were false to Siegfried, are true to his murderer. This so enrages her, that she is willing to send the last man against them. She does not consider that it would be cowardly in them to desert Hagen in his need, when he had always been so true to them. She forgets everything but her own point of view and her revenge. She will not even grant her enemies an open fight, but will have them murdered even as they murdered Siegfried. This intense thirst for revenge is terrible, especially in a woman; but one pities her for all.[89] She has suffered much wrong and she is a product of the heroic age. Even her children are used simply as instruments to accomplish her end. Siegfried's son has been sent away until he shall have gained sufficient strength to overcome Hagen. She even allows her enemy to kill Ortnit so as to arouse Attila's

[87] W. IV: 204, 3267 ff.

[88] W. IV: 232, 3702 ff.

[89] She reminds one of Michael Kohlhaas in this immoderate thirst for revenge. Like him every sacrifice seems small to her compared with it.

wrath against the Burgundians.[90] The Nibelungen hoard will buy her avengers, and so she desires it. To pay it as a debt to the only surviving crippled Hun, she orders the death of her last brother.[91] When she finds that Hagen has again deceived her, everything that stood between them destroyed, she draws Balmung and gives him his death-blow. She has long lived only for revenge and, now that she has it, she is ripe for death. Hildebrand's sword mercifully gives her rest, the last representative of heroic, defiant heathendom. Dietrich von Bern, the Christian, capable of noble self-renunciation, is left master of the world.

If Hebbel had been portraying Kriemhild in his earlier years, he would have felt it necessary to find some such motive as he did in the case of Judith. There is no discussion here that woman's mission is to bear men, not to kill them. Indeed, the poet omits words of Hildebrand in the epic which indicate such an attitude. And this is the case, although Hagen's offence against Kriemhild is not so terrible as that of Holofernes against Judith, which is worse than any murder. But Kriemhild causes the death of her enemies and Hebbel never feels compelled to explain her deed otherwise than from the wrong done her and from her fierce, revengeful nature. There could be no more striking proof than this of the radical change in the poet's conception of woman, which took place during the twenty years which elapsed between the production of *Judith* and *Die Nibelungen.*

[90] Kriemhild sends the child to Hagen when she knows he would gladly do anything to hurt her. She taunts the proud Burgundians with the boy's future power, and shows no fear when Hagen says the child will be short-lived, although it is plainly a threat. (v. 4942). She is also well aware that word of the massacre she has ordered may reach them at any moment. When Hagen rises and draws his sword, a motion entirely natural in self-defense, when he has heard of the treachery, and although he has not even looked at the child, she cries out, "Mein Kind! Mein Kind!" (v. 4956). She may not intend to call his attention to the child, but by this cry, she certainly does suggest to him the possibility of taking this kind of revenge. The variant reading (p. 392, 1 ff.) also points to this, though it in itself could never prove it; when an author omits lines, his object may be to discard the motive they suggest. Miss Perlam (190 f.) among others, thinks that Kriemhild purposely sacrificed her child, because she could not love the son of Attila.

[91] The motive for the murder of Gunther is one of the least convincing elements in the drama. The epic seems here to need more interpretation than Hebbel gives.

Queen Ute and Rüdeger's wife and daughter appear in but a few scenes and are hardly characterized at all. They are intended to give atmosphere, to take us back to the Middle Ages. Gudrun, the daughter, is also necessary to the plot as the cause of Rüdeger's tragic conflict. He must fight not only against the guests he himself has conducted to court, but also against his promised son-in-law. Ute serves first as a confidante of Kriemhild's shy love for Siegfried and, in the end, the lock of her gray hair is a reminder of the suffering she has already undergone, and an entreaty that her daughter show mercy to her sons.

A much more important and interesting figure is Frigga. There is no such person in the epic. Geibel [92] is the first to give Brunhild a maid whose name is Sigrun. The character, however, is but little developed, and, as such, had no influence on Hebbel's creation. In his drama, like Gora in Grillparzer's *Goldenes Vliess,* she is a monitor to the young queen.[93] She represents the old heathen point of view. She suspects the mystery of Brunhild's existence and is, from the beginning, a bitter enemy of the Burgundians. Her whole soul is wrapped up in Brunhild, for whom she has cared since the "Wanderer" laid her in her arms a living child, the exact counterpart of the dead child on the former queen's breast. She urges first that Brunhild offer a sacrifice to the gods, to whom she justly owes allegiance, that they may protect her. But her warning is not heard, and even Brunhild's prophetic vision does not help, though it comforts Frigga for a time.

But when all has not availed, she shows her true devotion by trying to deceive Brunhild into happiness, representing that it was Burgundy which appeared in the queen's prophetic vision. She remains silent, even after she learns that Siegfried carries the magic sword Balmung and owns the Nibelungen hoard. She tells Ute that she has done more than they dream in her efforts to make Brunhild happy, and promises, so long as she is so, not to remind her of the time that she has

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[92] *Brunhild,* 1857. The origin of the name Frigga is given by Miss Periam (64).

[93] cf. W. IV: XXX.

forgotten. But when Brunhild has learned of the indignities which have been put upon her, Frigga no longer spares her, but tells her all, how Siegfried is the wielder of Balmung and how the glorious office of Norne has become forever unattainable. To Frigga this is the terrible crime against her mistress, but Brunhild is conscious only of her wounded heart. One is forced to admire the proud reserve of the maid toward the rival of her mistress. When Kriemhild asks whether Brunhild lacks the power to forgive a wrong done her, Frigga answers, "I do not know. She never had an opportunity to show. She was never injured."[94] We have but one more glimpse of her, but in it the true fidelity of her heart is shown. We find her protecting Brunhild at the grave of Siegfried from the danger of being buried alive. The whole picture of the stern, heathen soul, devoted unto death, is a touching one.

Most striking is the contrast between the two great heroines. Kriemhild develops from a sweet, innocent, shrinking girl to an avenging fury, and Brunhild from a mighty Valkyrie, through a woman maddened by scorn and humiliation, to an utterly hopeless being, living only in the memory of the one mate the world could produce for her. But they are still alike, in that they are formed on a mighty mould. They are fit companions of Siegfried, Hagen and Dietrich von Bern. Each claims justice for the wrongs done her, and each has the power to obtain her vengeance. Each endures in her heart even more suffering than she inflicts, for each is called upon to sacrifice the dearest to obtain her end.[95] Both are terrible and yet fill one's heart with infinite pity. In these two characters, Hebbel has reached a very high point in the delineation of the demoniac forces which lie latent in woman.[96]

[94] W. IV: 143, v. 2267 ff.

[95] B. VI: 299, 20 ff., Dec. 59.

[96] There is more unanimity of opinion in regard to the character of Kriemhild than in regard to Brunhild. She is usually thought to be well delineated (Frenzel, 37; Bulthaupt, 205; Periam, 191; Treitschke, 477; Dingelstedt, 209; Pfeffer, 90). But some, especially ardent admirers of Wagner, condemn her together with the other characters of the trilogy. (Rehorn, 143 f., Meinck, 86). The latter thinks her character unsuitable for drama because it changes, whereas that is the very point admiring critics especially praise. He moreover thinks her motives unnatural, the delays too long, and the picture of her after Siegfried's death most unpleasant.

Clara Vere and *Christus* (1863).

Up to the time of his death, Hebbel continued to plan plays and to write them. But he completed no more. Among the last plans, was the tragedy of the coquette, Clara Vere, who practiced the subjugation of men just as a hunter does shooting.[97]

Maria Magdalene, in *Christus,* was to be in love with Christ. In her efforts to make him jealous, she gives herself to another man. At his tender forgiveness, she sinks at his feet in sincere penitence. Thus Hebbel's last conception of forgiveness for the fallen woman is that it be brought about by a divine, selfless love.[98] This forms, then, the last step in the development of this thought, which began its evolution in the early lyrics such as *Rosa,* continued in *Maria Magdalene, Julia, Die Schauspielerin,* and ended in *Christus.*

Anna and Mary as they watch by the cradle of the divine infant show yearning, anxious, maternal love.[99]

Demetrius (1863).

Most of the poet's efforts and interests during the last years of his life were devoted to his tragedy, *Demetrius.* As early as the summer of 1857, Hebbel began to think again of this material which had appealed to him in his youth as suitable for a drama.[100] The next year he met the Princess Wittgenstein, whom he studied as a typical Slav. Occasionally he grew discouraged because of his insufficient knowledge of the subject, abandoned it and turned to other work. At last, in October, 1863, creative power came to him in the midst of a severe illness, as it had done before, both in Hamburg and Copenhagen. The play developed in his mind, and he wrote as long as he had strength. But it failed him finally before he was able to complete this last tragedy.

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[97] W. V: 315, 9 f.
[98] W. V: 317, 5 ff; 318, 3 ff.
[99] W. V: 319 f.
[100] T. IV: 3620; cf. T. I: 1047, Mar. 38; II: 2231, Jan. 41; III: 4566, Feb. 49.

In *Demetrius* political, social and religious problems may again be traced. The religious struggle between the orthodox Greek church and the Roman see is present, though it is used only to account for the assistance of the churchmen in the deception.[1] The social problem is that of the relation between mother and child, somewhat similar to the one in *Mutter und Kind.* This is important in bringing about the catastrophe. But the problem which holds the center of interest is the political one, the king and his people. This problem long interested Hebbel, as may be noticed in *Herodes und Mariamne,* where we have the king as successful usurper of low birth, but holding his power against continual secret intrigues, and developing in the end into a tyrant. In the *Rubin* there is almost a parody on a tyrannical state, ending with the founder of a new line, which, for a few generations, at least, will govern wisely and humanely. In *Agnes Bernauer* the duty of sacrifice which the prince owes to his subjects is emphasized. In *Gyges,* Kandaules represents the king who is not sufficiently considerate of the feelings of his people and Gyges is again the founder of a newer, better line. And now Demetrius is the unconscious usurper who is claiming, with full conviction of his right to it, a throne that is not justly his. The great tragic conflict is the one in his soul after he realizes that he is a usurper, who has become czar, not by innate power, but by a false claim of legitimacy. His honorable nature impells him to throw everything aside, but that he dare not do, because of the ruin of his friends which would inevitably follow. Unfortunately, we do not know how he was to act at the end. Probably he hurled defiance at his enemies and told the truth.[2]

When one reads of the gay, light-hearted Marina, who sees no problem in her life but is just bright and sweet and young,

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[1] The legate desires to unite the whole world under one religious headship. Werner (W. VI: XXXII) considers that this makes *Demetrius* the last link in the chain of Hebbel's dramas which are concerned with the problems of historical religion, *Moloch, Judith, Herodes und Mariamne, Die Nibelungen,* and *Demetrius.* It seems to me that *Genoveva* also belongs in this list.

[2] The statement of Christine Hebbel, that the end was to have come suddenly and that Otrepiep was to have stabbed Demetrius from behind, leaves room for many possible reasons or excuses for the assassination, as the various conclusions of different men show. (cf. Werner W. VI: XXXI.)

one recognizes a new influence and a helpful one. Here is no longer a woman with a sad past like Elise or Christine, but a happy girl. As this is the only figure of importance in any of Hebbel's plays that leaves this bright, agreeable impression, one feels bound to explain its appearance here. Earlier heroines are, at best, sweet and gentle, but never merry.

Marie Wittgenstein, the daughter of a Polish princess and an attractive girl, has been regarded as the model for this character.[3] But her loveliness tended rather to the serious and intellectual, and cannot explain this lively, mocking girl.[4] Marina's characteristics might be borrowed from Titi, the merry little daughter, who was first lady in *Verkleidungen* and whom Hebbel describes as "ein frisches, gesundes Kind,"[5] no genius, no problematic character, as he is delighted to notice. Apparently a memory of his youth helped in the delineation of the relations between Demetrius and Marina. The story of how the hero, as a boy, had pulled the little heroine's hair shows a marked resemblance to the incident with Emilie Voss related in the autobiography.[6]

In Hebbel's play Marina takes a less important position than she does in the treatment of the subject by most dramatists.[7] Her character in the different plays is almost as varied as that of the hero. Demetrius changes from the monster Sumarakoff paints to the model hero of Lope de Vega, that is, from the cruel, terrible tyrant who carves his way to a throne to which he has absolutely no claim, to a genuine prince, who, after long persecution, reaches his rightful place and there pardons all his enemies. Marina is now a cold, cruel, utterly heartless embodiment of personal ambition, using Demetrius merely as an instrument for her own ends, as in Schiller's fragment, and now a loving girl who delights in being czarina and follows her lover to the battle field to know their fate at once,

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[3] Werner, *Hebbel*, 343.

[4] Her beauty, however, probably influenced 345 ff. cf. Kuh, *Leben*, II: 596 f.

[5] B. VII: 135, Jan. 62.

[6] W. VI: 16, 302 ff. and W. VIII: 98 f. cf. Werner, *Hebbel*, 7 and W. VI: 465.

[7] This is probably due to the fact that the character was the last to reveal itself to the poet. B. VI: 189, Aug. 58.

as in Lope de Vega, and now the bright, happy, joy-giving personality Hebbel paints. His interpretation does not seem to come from history, nor from any of his predecessors, but to be an original creation. As his criticism of Schiller's Marina shows,[8] he did not like the idea of her being personified love of power, but wanted to make her a more human and lovable being. One enjoys the playful court she holds over Demetrius and again the scornful amusement the Russians afford her. But one pities while one smiles, for the girl is easily deceived by the wily Prince Schuiskoi, and little dreams that her light raillery of the things that her new subjects take in bitter earnest is but a bad augury for a happy reign. Like another Marie Antionette, Marina, goes with smile and jest toward her tragic fate. And her jests, like those of the unfortunate French queen, help to bring about the catastrophe. To her the formality of the state dinner and the stiff ugly clothes are objects for derision. Like Kandaules's sword and crown, they belong to a past order of things and in mocking at them, Marina wakes a "slumbering world" which destroys her.

She evinces but little love for Demetrius although she seems to enjoy his adoration of her. In the *Ideen*,[9] however, she answers her husband's question, "Liebst du mich?" with the words, "Von heute an." This seems to point to the intention of the poet to have her wake to love before the close of the tragedy.

Of far more importance in the dramatic action is Marfa. Her character changes less in different treatments of the material than does that of Demetrius or Marina. When Demetrius becomes a real prince, as in Lope de Vega's play, her importance sinks and she disappears after he comes on the scene. But when he is a pretender she becomes more important. Schiller makes her act from revenge and hatred of Boris.[10] This motive Hebbel cast aside as unworthy of a woman who must be the axis of the whole action. Hence in his play she really doubts, and so her

[8] B. VI: 204, Oct. 58.

[9] W. VI: 462, 29 f.

[10] cf. Bernays, *Schriften zur Kritik und Literaturgeschichte*, IV: 41 ff.; Werner, W. VI: XXXIV.

character is beautified and her dramatic struggle deepened. It is no longer between hatred of a pretender and longing for revenge, but between love of the dead and loyalty to the living.

Marfa's character as a whole is one of the most complicated and interesting which Hebbel has conceived. The empress, with her hatred of Boris, her memories of the massacre with which she avenged the death of her child, her bitterness at the loss of power is strangely mingled with two other characters, the nun, who, though forced into the cloister against her will, has learned to love its peace, and would not wish to return to take up the burden of the work of the world, and the mother, whose tender love for her child is the one link that could draw her back to Moscow. This woman, with all her royal dignity, her nun's serenity, and her mother's heart, decides Demetrius's fate by her attitude. Her recognition of him at the beginning of his career is the turning point. For this reason he has no difficulty in winning his empire. But her heart has never once beaten high with the thought that the noble, brave young hero is really her son. She admires him, she gives him her support freely, but to her the little coffin in the burial vault still holds her child. She is impelled to visit it and bathes it with her tears, although she is still in doubt until Municzik gives the order to carry the coffin from its place among the princes. Then her heart speaks and repudiates the false Demetrius. She still does her best for him and calls him "son" and his wife "daughter", but she is now more than doubtful. Hebbel intended to have her appear before the people to save Demetrius; but, by this very act of love, she was to cause his death.[11]

Hebbel's idea of making Demetrius the son of Ivan, but not the legitimate heir to the throne, made a real mother an almost necessary figure, and one quite in the spirit of his love of contrast. Barbara serves as a splendid foil to Marfa and also to Demetrius himself. When he lifts her and says, "You have suffered the first pain for me, you shall have the first reward," he little guesses the real import of his remark, nor that she has already had her reward in seeing him czar and in being lifted by him. The poor, lame, little woman, with her mild blue eyes

[11] W. VI: 462, 25 f.

and gentle face,[12] is a touching figure. She is timid and quiet by nature, but she pushes her way through the crowd to kiss her son's garments and threatens with her crutch those who doubt his claims.[13] She insists to the guards that she is to see him,[14] but when she reaches his presence, she has but one request, that he give her the right to embrace him. He misunderstands this wealth of self-sacrificing affection, and thinks he sees before him a woman who sold her child. In accordance with the evident meaning of *Mutter und Kind,* this is an unpardonable offence in the poet's eyes. Demetrius shares this feeling and can scarcely forgive her, even when he thinks she has been deceived and believed she was making her child czar. But the explanation that it was better than the foundling asylum moves him. Cruelly as Demetrius's scorn cuts her, she withstands the temptation to tell him the truth, and only reveals it when he asks her to swear to Marfa that he is the heir to the throne. Too late she cries, "O, that I could withdraw!"[15] But though she would cheerfully die to save him from the results of her fatal mistake, he must be involved in guilt and go to destruction because of her ignorance and inexperience.

The relation between mother and child is here made an important element in tragedy. Barbara parts from Demetrius to save him from physical suffering, and she plunges him into the deepest spiritual conflict and tragic guilt. Marfa can feel only as a mother should toward the little murdered child, and no amount of will or admiration can make her deny her own for this outsider. Marina is a new attempt to heighten the tragic effect by the gay, unconscious happiness of the heroine. She alone fails to see her danger and seems like a child playing with an adder. It is, indeed, in her inability to see the serious situation that her guilt lies.

2. EPIC.

Of the stories published while Hebbel was in Vienna, two only, *Die Kuh* and *Haidvogel* are known to have been written

[12] W. VI: 119, 2805 ff.
[13] W. VI: 90, 2112 f.; 78, 1835 f.
[14] W. VI: 113, 2654 ff.
[15] W. VI: 121, 2864.

then. Many of them were probably entirely completed ten years before, although it is always possible that they were modified before publication.

In only one of these stories, *Anna,* is a female character the center of interest, but the wife in *Haidvogel* is well delineated. In all other instances the women are of so little importance to the action that they are only sketched in.

Die beiden Vagabonden 1847 (1837)

In *Die beiden Vagabonden* only two women are mentioned, the wife and daughter of the would-be gold-maker. The wife[16] is an elderly woman, but, in spite of her glasses and gray hair, full of life and energy. She evidently has no sympathy whatever with her husband's folly in believing in Hanns and Jürgen. The two vagabonds are good natured in their way of deceiving poor old Jacob and win one's sympathy. Hanns especially is so merry and has so much mother-wit, that we wish he could make the disdainful, suspicious Babette change her mind and love him.[17] Werner[18] thinks this was the probable conclusion of the story.

Schnock 1847 (1837)

Schnock is personified cowardice and came into being under the influence of Jean Paul, as Werner conclusively proves.[19] This fact probably affected, not only the name of the wife, Magdalena Kotzschneuzel, but also her character and several of the incidents. Her husband's fear of her seems to have had no grounds at first, and to have been caused, partly by his character and partly by the painful kiss he saw his mother give his father.[20] He always regards her meekness and devotion as signs of deceit; but the reader observes that he is never henpecked until she is finally convinced that he is a coward, and, even

[16] W. VIII: 142, 3 ff.
[17] W. VIII: 140, 29 ff.
[18] W. VIII: XLII.
[19] W. VIII: XXXV ff.
[20] W. VIII: 153, 3 f.

then, she defends him from external attacks.[21] Hebbel has however no intention of making her an object of sympathy. She becomes as extravagantly avaricious as her husband is cowardly.[22]

The marriage of Schnock and his Magdalena is almost a parody of Hebbel's dread of marriage during the time when the story is thought to have been written (1837). Both the wife and the mother of the unheroic hero are a combination of shrew and miser, and give the impression that marriage is no blessing. It is always to be remembered, however, that in humorous writing the opinions expressed must be accepted with caution.

Pauls merkwürdigste Nacht 1847 (1837).

The chief interest in connection with this story is that Hebbel is supposed to have portrayed his own brother and mother in the characters of Paul and his mother.[23] Like *Schnock,* it is a story of cowardice, but of childish cowardice that fears the dark and ghosts. The mother is the energetic woman of the people who hates laziness, and severely reproves her son when he exhibits this quality, much as Antje Margarethe herself may have expressed her opinion of her sons Friedrich and Johann.[24]

Schneidermeister Nepomuk Schlägel auf der Freudenjagd 1847 (1837)

This character sketch of the man who seeks for reasons to be dissatisfied with his life and fate, required only one woman, the tailor's wife. She is gentle and devoted, indeed, quite a model wife. She only affords her husband material for his strange kind of pleasure by refusing him permission to cut off her beautiful hair and sell it.[25] Thus, as he thinks, even at home, he has to endure a cross unjustly come upon him.

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[21] W. VIII: 169, 13 ff.
[22] W. VIII: 188 ff.
[23] Werner W. VIII: XXXII.
[24] W. VIII: 239, 13 ff.
[25] W. VIII: 261, 5 ff.

Anna 1847 (1836)

Like *Michael Kohlhaas*, Anna is the tragedy of the results of injustice on an originally proud, noble nature. It is all on a smaller scale. The cause, the breaking of a soup-tureen, is less, the time is much shorter and the results are less far-reaching, though equally terrible. The element of time is a serious defect. It is difficult to believe that the sweet girl who is singing at the beginning of the story, could be so changed in a single day that she would allow the house she lived in to be burned to the ground without an effort to give the alarm. To be sure, she meets injustice from everyone, from the master because of his bad temper and the memory of her rebuff in the arbor,[26] from her fellow servants because of jealousy and dislike of her native superiority,[27] from her lover because he had been drinking to drown his disappointment and thus had rendered himself incapable of understanding her love and tenderness. He only sees that she refuses to do what he wishes.[28] Besides, she is a woman of deep feeling, but of little power of expression. She shows anger by closely pressed lips and flaming cheeks, or by blows, love by tender glances or a few shy caresses, her resolution by actions rather than words.[29] This reserved nature, full as it is of pent-up emotions and the cruel injustice she is forced to experience in such a short time, make her terrible revenge possible, particularly as she could secure it by simply remaining silent.

When she realizes that she has set fire to the village as well, remorse drives her mad. But she is still able to perform heroic deeds before plunging into the flames for which she herself is responsible. It was this tragedy of the responsibility of a being who stands very low in the scale of society that Hebbel wished to present in this story.[30]

At first sight Anna's guilt seems to be similar in nature to that of the women of the last period of Hebbel's production.

[26] W. VIII: 230 f.
[27] W. VIII: 231, 8 f.
[28] W. VIII: 233.
[29] W. VIII: 234 f.
[30] W. VIII: 419, 70 ff., 1847.

But a careful study will reveal the fact that she shows no initiative. It is simply by accident that the light is overturned and the fire kindled. Her wrong-doing is purely passive and entirely in harmony with the view of woman the poet had during this second period.[31]

Die Kuh 1848 (1847)

This wonderful, though terrible story, with its heaping up of horrors, contains but a few words uttered by a woman and they are only enough to indicate that she is wife and mother.[32] In Kleist's manner, we are not told whether she dies by accident or because she no longer desires to live after the terrible death of her child.

Herr Haidvogel und seine Familie 1848 (1847)

This story is thought to have been begun in Hamburg, but one feels fairly certain that the character of the wife received its present form in Vienna. Haidvogel is the worst form of Mr. Micawber. He differs from the famous creation of Dickens in that he is intentionally dishonest. The wife is drawn on no such humorous lines as the faithful Mrs. Micawber. It is pathetic, almost tragic to see her sad, silent resignation to starvation and cold. But she is none the less a woman of determination and good sense, as she proves when she refuses to allow her husband to spend the money she is to inherit.[33] This independence, quiet though it is, is a characteristic which no female character of Hebbels possesses before the time of his association with his wife.[34]

Ein Leiden unserer Zeit (1851)

This is merely the self revelation of a man similar in character to Bertram in *Julia.*

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[31] cf. Becker, 37.

[32] W. VIII: 248, 29 ff. Bastier (25 ff.) sees in this story an obsession on Hebbel's part that he was responsible for the death of Max.

[33] W. VIII: 228, 25 ff.

[34] Mrs. von Klenze (Becker, 40) finds her refined, self-controlled, full of repressed bitterness and well-delineated.

Matteo 1855 (1841)

As *Agnes Bernauer* is the tragedy of excessive beauty, so *Matteo* is the tragedy of ugliness so revolting that it causes people to distrust a man with such an exterior. The female characters merely serve to illustrate this idea and have no other interest for the author. Even lovely Felicita, Matteo's morning star,[35] serves as the first mirror to show the unfortunate man, that hideous as he now is, he may never hope to win love. The old woman who nurses and helps him is introduced only to show his kindliness of nature, and thus make the suspicious attitude of the world toward him seem as unjust as possible.[36]

The adulteress is introduced to show that there is still a place where Matteo can be useful. The development of her character is so entirely neglected that the sudden change from rage and hatred against her husband to complete submission to him is not psychologically correct. Hebbel probably thought that love is the strongest motive for a woman until her mother-love, a still stronger instinct, conquers it. It is difficult to believe that within a few moments after expressing the greatest love for him, the woman could say she hated her seducer as much as she formerly loved him, that she could be willing to carry away his dead body, or that after such a horrible experience she could calmly bind Matteo's arm and carry in the supper.

The general attitude of her husband is harsh and violent. His cruelty toward the child is regarded by the author as the fault of the mother.[37] Indeed, it apparently would have been justifiable, in Hebbel's eyes, if the child had not been his own.

Mutter und Kind (1859)

In 1847, shortly after the birth of Christine's first child,[38] Hebbel composed the story of *Mutter und Kind.* He was then a witness to all the joys of motherhood and for the first time

[35] W. VIII: 202, 14 ff.
[36] W. VIII: 207, 31 ff.
[37] W. VIII: 214.
[38] T. III: 3923, Jan. 47.

he felt a father's genuine satisfaction. Before, in the midst of such natural emotions, there had come a sense of the hard position of the mother and mocking remarks of acquaintances. When the poem was finally completed it received warmth of tone from the poet's growing happiness with wife and child and his delight in Gmünden.

In writing *Mutter und Kind,* memories of Hebbel's whole life came back to him. In the descriptions of Christian's extreme poverty there are several things to show that the life in Wesselburen was before his mind.[39] In Magdalena's early adventure in the streets of Hamburg from which the hero saved her, may be read the idealized experience of Hebbel himself during his first stay there.[40] The absolute devotion of the mother to her child shows the result of observation on Christine and Elise.[41] While he was actually writing the epic he felt that all the problems of the modern world were before him, but that he was now able to look on them all as from the standpoint of one who had died and returned from a brighter star to solve them better.[42] The great economic problem of capital and labor was one of these. It is interesting to note how Hebbel's usual criticism of society has here become constructive rather than destructive. He thinks bread, and not cannon balls, is the solution of the difficulty between the rich and the poor. There may be difference of opinion as to the best way to give the bread, and modern economists would probably prescribe better wages and shorter hours rather than promiscuous charity, but they would certainly agree that a just division is the only possible way to avoid trouble.[43]

The central thought of the poem, however, is the relation between mother and child. The quotation, "Dasz erst die Ehe den Menschen zum ganzen Menschen macht,"[44] may refer to this poem, as has been thought.[45] Here, as elsewhere in this

[39] cf. Werner, *Hebbel,* 8 f.
[40] T. I: 58, July, 35.
[41] T. II: 2989, Jan. 44.
[42] B. V: 303, Apr. 56.
[43] cf. B. VI: 223, Dec. 58.
[44] T. III: 3864, Dec. 46, and note.
[45] Werner, W. VIII: XLVII.

period, Hebbel has shown how marital happiness has made the young couple stronger and better. But a careful analysis of the poem will show that it is not the marriage which causes the growth to a complete humanity, but that motherhood first rouses Magdalena to a comprehension of the dreadful compact she has made.

The relation between mother and child Hebbel always regarded as the primal, the most holy human tie. He felt this so keenly that he considered the new sacred duty to which it admitted her as justification of the fall of a woman.[46] Magdalena leaves her husband to save her child. Is that a justification of marriage or motherhood? And Christian sees in the act no wrong. When he finds her he at once yields, and takes her back with the promise that he will go with her. In a few lines of the poem Hebbel has expressed his sense of the beauty of the relation between parents and children as something which all classes of society share:

"Wer zählt die Freuden der Eltern
An der Wiege des Kindes, und wer die Wonnen der Mutter,
Wenn sie noch Alles in Allem ihm sein darf, während der Vater
Ihm noch ferne steht, wie Himmel und Erde, und einzig
Durch die Sorge für sie, die Beide vertritt, wie ihn selber,
Seine Liebe zu ihm bethätigt .....
Wie der Kelch der Gemeinde auf gleiche Weise an Alle
Kommt und Alle erquickt, so kommt auch dieses an Alle;
Fürsten empfinden's nicht tiefer und Bettler empfinden's nicht schwächer,
Weil die Einen den Säugling in Purpur wickeln, die Andern
In die Krippe ihn legen, das giebt kein Mehr und kein Minder,
Und so ist die Natur gerecht im Ganzen und Grossen."[47]

Although one may question the exact truth of this sentiment, and be inclined to doubt that the beggar is quite so happy as is the prince at sight of the child, still beggars do not often read *Mutter und Kind* and the statement is true for those of us who do.

[46] T. II: 2030, May, 40.
[47] W. VIII: 327 vv. 1412 ff.

Magdalena is a sweet, industrious girl, devoted to duty, generous, preferring home to the pleasures and turmoil of the city, and all clinging love for Christian. The miracle of motherhood develops in this simple being a complex struggle between the duty she owes her husband and the duty she must render her child. Almost without hesitation she chooses the latter and will suffer anything rather than abandon the life put into her keeping.[48] But she remains loving and submissive toward Christian in all other respects.

In Magdalena we have the joy of motherhood, the passion of possession of the child; in her mistress, the yearning for it all. She has fretted over it until she is scarcely sane. She feels shamed before her happier sisters and cannot bear to see a little child. Toward her devoted husband she has a sense of guilt, because she has been unable to give him the desired heir. This explains her willingness to rob Magdalena of her child, although she half guesses the feelings of a mother. Her development comes when she learns, at last, that, by giving of her abundance to a child who is not hers, she may receive a genuine and unselfish happiness. One is reminded of the conclusion of *Little Eyolf,* where Rita resolves to make the poor children happy.

In this poem then, Hebbel has expressed his growing comprehension of the bond which is the foundation of all social life, that between the mother and her child; and he shows it to be the strongest bond a woman can feel.

3. LYRICS.

The lyrics written during the last period of Hebbel's life reflect his new views as much as do his dramas. As is the case with many poets as they grow older, the epigramatic tendency is more developed and many of the poems consist of only a few lines. In subject, a great number are connected with his new domestic happiness and addressed either to his wife or his daughter. Of the comparatively few love poems about others,

[48] cf. *Demetrius,* W. VI: 119, 2825 ff., where the hero expresses loathing for a mother who is willing to sell her child.

most refer to the days of his youth. The mature man looks back lovingly to the visions of the boy. There are a few remnants of the cynicism of the previous period and still fewer indications that the poet could feel a Platonic love for other women.

In one of the poems addressed to Christine, he says that separation from her proves that one can leave his life and still not die.[49] To him she is both Helen and Penelope, the personification of beauty and charm and of fidelity.[50] In her purity and nobility she believes nothing but good, even of her enemies.[51] Her constancy in great things is so remarkable that she shames even the stronger sex; but she pays tribute to the weakness natural to a woman by changing small things continually.[52] Twice her artistic gifts are praised.[53]

The most striking expression of Hebbel's feelings for his home and the dear wife and child is in the poem, *Geburtstag auf der Reise.*[54] He scarcely feels that he has courage to begin the new year of his life when they are not there to congratulate him. How can he live without them? The duty of a father gives him courage to struggle on and his wife lends him strength. The poems which Titi learned to recite to her mother on festive occasions almost always refer to the beauty of Christine's love for her daughter.[55]

The cynical idea of love that was found in the Italian period is still not foreign to the poet. The most striking example, *Der Phönix* [56] was, however, quite possibly written in Italy and not published until later. Man is the phoenix and the flame that should renew his life, at first flames up brightly because it is fanned by love. But he soon neglects it, the wood is damp, the flame dies down and the phoenix grows cold and stiff. The reference to the fleeting character of love is very evident.

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[49] W. VII: 199, *An Christine,* Dec. 47.

[50] W. VII: 234, *An Christine mit Vossens Homer,* Dec. 54.

[51] W. VI: 239, *In das Album meiner Frau,* Mar. 53.

[52] W. VI: 451, *An meine Frau,* after 1857.

[53] W. VI: 282 f., *Auf die deutsche Künstlerin,* Sept. 50; W. VI: 313, *An. C. E.,* Aug. 45.

[54] W. VI: 247 ff. Mar. 52.

[55] W. VII: 205, *Zum Geburtstag für Mama;* W. VII: 226 f. (2 poems), 1858 and 1859; W. VII: 237, *Der lieben Mama von Titi,* 1862.

[56] W. VI: 331, 1848.

The rather coarse poem, *Der heilige Johannes,*[57] refers to the so-called love of a priest and his cook. But this cynical tale was intended to be humorous.

The sensuous conception of love is again expressed in *Die Odaliske,*[58] where it seems entirely in place. It reproduces the sensations of the perfect human animal whose one idea is surrender, now that her "hour has come."

But side by side with this is the ideal view of love of the Wesselburen period, only filled with a new life by the richer experiences of the man. The dainty little poem, *Liebesprobe,*[59] with its lesson of tenderness is an example of this; as is also the playful fancy as to how the best love letter should be written.[60]

Perhaps the dream of Gretchen Carstens[61] awoke anew in Hebbel the memory of his early emotions. At any rate, there were written at about that time, 1856, four of the numbers of *Ein frühes Liebesleben.* One[62] depicts the lover who doubts his own good fortune when he reflects that his beloved is mild and faithful to all and not to him alone. Another[63] sings the rapture of knowledge that she loves him. Here, as in *Gebet,* written in 1835, the poet mingles the conception of love and religion, but in an entirely different manner. With her soul far from earth, the young girl approaches the altar to take the sacrament. She is pale with the thought that only the worthy should partake of it, when she lifts her eyes and meets his. She is no longer pale but her hand shakes so that she spills the wine when she touches the cup. He knows that she loves him or his glance would not have the power to call her spirit from her devotion. *Glück*[64] records his shy joy when he kissed her and touched her hand and she seemed holy to him. *Der Tod*[65] shows her as a broken white blossom among the other

[57] W. VII: 210 ff., end of 40's.
[58] W. VI: 187 ff., Oct. 53.
[59] W. VI: 210, July, 54.
[60] W. VI: 285, *Der beste Liebesbrief,* 1856 or '57; cf. T. III: 4446, Aug. 48.
[61] T. IV: 5519. 69. Dec. 56.
[62] W. VI: 200, *Kampf,* 1856. Bastier (57) thinks this was written in memory of Elise.
[63] W. VI: 200 f., *Sieg,* 1856.
[64] W. VI: 201, *Glück,* 1856.
[65] W. VI: 201 f., *Der Tod,* 1856.

flowers. All this is tender, graceful and suggestive and with real life-blood in it. It seems genuine and a human document without being oppressively passionate. It is also interesting to note that these four numbers of *Ein frühes Liebesleben,* with one exception, refer to the beloved as alive, whereas, most of the other numbers speak of her as dead. Now life is more desirable to Hebbel than death.

Hebbel was so pleased with his fancy about a forest planted entirely by lovers as they were married, that he wrote a long poem to show the origin of the custom and the influence it would have on the youth of later times.[66]

The woman once loved and now forgotten, which was formerly such a favorite subject with the poet, is only mentioned once in this period.[67]

Hebbel's tribute to the new emotions of the time is small. Of the Princess Marie Wittgenstein [68] he writes that she is so beautiful and noble that she makes him blush for all the wrong he has committed. A feeling nearer to love is expressed in the poem, *Auf ein sehr schönes Mädchen* [69] which was very probably addressed to the same beautiful girl. The poet says that only the fact that he is old and she is young prevents him from seeking her love.

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[66] W. VI: 397 ff., *Der Wald,* Dec. 57.

[67] W. VI: 418, *Was ist das für ein Frauenbild,* Feb. 62. Bastier (55) ascribes this also to Elise.

[68] W. VI: 400 f., June, 58.

[69] W. VI: 426 f., Oct. 62. Bastier (21ff.), claims that this poem refers to the poet's daughter Titi. His arguments do not seem convincing to me.

CHAPTER III.

Summary of the Results of this Investigation.

The results of this investigation show that there is a remarkable similarity between Hebbel's theories in regard to women and the characters he created. This can be shown period for period and naturally follows from the conscious element in the poet's work. There was little of the somnambulist in him. Each trait of character was thought out, pondered over, studied. He could always give an account of his reasons for each action and motive.

The pure, beautiful virgin, adorable rather than lovable, who was the ideal woman of Hebbel's early life, is as evidently drawn from literature as are the unreal, unconvincing Lauras and Rosas of the lyrics, as Flamina in *Mirandola*, as Laura in *Holion* and *Brudermord*, as the nameless daughter of the painter, even as Emilie, although she has borrowed a little life from the girl whose name she bears.

In his early manhood, to this ideal of beauty and charm, he adds his conception of Elise, boundless love and self-surrender, with sympathetic understanding for the man she loves. Every heroine of this period has these characteristics. No one can fail to see them in Clara, and, especially, in Genoveva, but Judith too longs to give her whole soul to a man worthy of the gift.

It is evident that this is a growing rather than a changing ideal. Hebbel's first conception is practically sexless. With the idea of sex in the second period comes a recognition of woman's need to give love and devotion. At the same time, there gradually awakes in the poet's mind the sense that woman is frequently obliged to endure injustice in this world. In Hamburg, he believes that, like Elise Lensing, she suffers from the

prejudices of society, and he gives expression to this feeling in *Maria Magdalene.*

Four years later, in the *Trauerspiel in Sicilien,* appears the first indication of a belief on the poet's part that a woman should claim her human rights; but it is a man and not the heroine who says it. In *Julia* the heroine . . . herself feels that her personality should be respected and Mariamne demands it and dies rather than live without it. This is the last step in the development of Hebbel's ideal woman. Yet this added strength does not exclude any of the former ideals. No virgin could be more exquisitely pure than Rhodope. Mariamne and Agnes are as ready to give their lives for love as any woman of Elise's type. But every woman, from Mariamne to Kriemhild, claims the right to her individuality, to be mistress of herself.

Hebbel's conception of love has a different evolution. In boyhood he has one view, then another and an entirely different one seems to prevail. Finally, both are merged into one. The early idealizing, adoring love, whose supreme culmination was death together, soon gave place to more physical passion. The farther it sank toward sensuality, the more cynical the poet became concerning the value of love. Its beautiful and pure elements he now gave the name friendship. But this was only a phase in his development, for the experiences of life taught him that an emotion which employs every faculty of man deserves the name of love.

Compare the colorless love of the maidens of the early lyrics, who merely weep for their lovers, die with them or follow them in death, with Judith and the large element of physical attraction there is in her love both for Manassah and for Holofernes, or with Clara, who is false to love, whatever her motive, or even with Genoveva, whose love is lifeless like the rest of her. Then think of Agnes, Mariamne, Eugenie, Brunhild, Kriemhild. Everyone of these heroines loves purely, deeply, intensely and until death. Even Rhodope, ethereal as she is, is true to her love and its ideals. Thus love is a stronger element in the character of woman for Hebbel during the last period of his life. And it is a purer, nobler love.

The poet's views of marriage change in the same way as

his conception of love. It is practically ignored in the Wesselburen period; but, for the most part, it is thought of as something elevating and desirable. In the second and third periods, it becomes a subject of personal dread and cynicism, while in the last, it is regarded as the ideal of life for both men and women.

In the creative work of the first period, the lovers usually die before they marry. In the second period, Hebbel's view of marriage is indicated by Judith's description of her wedding night, by the fact that Clara is willing to marry Leonhard, and by the evident lack of harmony between her father and mother. Most pronounced in its cynicism is the picture of marriage as given in *Die Obermedicinalräthin.* Only in *Genoveva* does the relation have dignity. Siegfried's lack of understanding of his wife is his guilt and the cause of the tragedy.

There is no such sensual and cynical conception of marriage in any of the great plays written in Vienna. Julia, unlike Clara, marries Bertram only on condition that their marriage shall be but a form. It is to obtain revenge, that Kriemhild consents to a union with Etzel, and then, after her marriage night, she persuades him never to approach her again. Eugenie in marrying Horst follows her heart and respects him. The tragic effect both in *Agnes Bernauer* and in *Siegfrieds Tod* is heightened by the delineation of the beautiful marriage relation which is so cruelly cut off. In *Herodes und Mariamne* and in *Gyges* the unfortunate lack of mutual comprehension between husband and wife is the central point of the tragedy. Brunhild's wretched marriage is due to the fact that she is forced to scorn the weakness and treachery of her husband. In all of the instances mentioned the unhappiness arises from spiritual causes and is used as a tragic element, just as love is in *Romeo and Juliet,* jealousy in *Othello* and ambition in *Macbeth.* It will be seen to be entirely different from the instances cited to illustrate the second period, and there is no indication of cynicism.

Hebbel's view of the tender relation between mother and child changes less than any other phase of his thought in connection with woman. In the early poems the child is always

young, and the bond, both for mother and child, is rather strengthened than weakened by death. The sanctity of motherhood is so great in Hebbel's eyes that he believes it can expiate the guilt of a fallen woman even when she murders her child.

In the second and third periods, he regards motherhood as woman's mission on earth and mother love as the most powerful feeling a woman can experience. Judith expresses these sentiments. Clara shrinks from suicide partly because of the young life she must extinguish with her own. A large part of the martyrdom of Genoveva consists in the sufferings of her child. Clara's mother and Katherina in *Genoveva* are early examples of a mother's devotion to grown children. The former lives only for her son and daughter, and the latter commits a crime for the sake of her foster child.

In the last period, Hebbel glorifies motherhood. It seems to him the greatest happiness both for mother and child. It is the central idea in *Mutter und Kind,* and an important element in *Demetrius,* where both Marfa and Barbara illustrate it. Julia consents to live in order to save her child. Mariamne remarks that had there been any possible means of escaping death, she would have discovered it when she looked for the last time on her children. One of the most terrible elements in the tragedy of Kriemhild's life is the fact that she becomes able to forget her children in her thirst for revenge. The power of mother love in older women is shown even more strongly in this last period than before. Not only Marfa and Barbara, but also Velleda and Ute illustrate this. The devotion of Albrecht to his mother's memory suggests how greatly she loved him. On the other hand, in *Herodes und Mariamne,* a sad element is the lack of harmony between the king and queen and their mothers. It will be noticed, however, that, even in the case of Alexandra, the poet has softened her traditional lack of loyalty to her daughter.

For various reasons, it seemed best in this article to divide Hebbel's life into four periods. On careful consideration, however, the first three reveal themselves as phases of one long period of shifting ideals. The second period, which might be termed the period of full development, begins with the pro-

duction of *Herodes und Mariamne,* 1848. From that time on the poet's views of woman and her relations to man are settled. There is no longer any change in them, only a gradual process of softening and clarification. This also holds in regard to the delineation of the characters of women. They are more lifelike, as well as stronger and finer. The bi-partition of Hebbel's life, then, which Frau Schapire-Neurath[1] has pointed out for his philosophical thought and Walzel[2] for his artistic growth, applies with equal force to the development of the poet's comprehension of woman.

Thus as Hebbel the man learned to treat woman with more consideration and respect, he came to different conclusions regarding her characteristics. He came to see that it is her duty to claim control of her own individuality. He admired more than formerly the strong woman, and depicted her with more sympathy. His views of her in her relation to man, love and marriage, as well as in motherhood, became broader and deeper and purer as his experience was more complete, until, at the end of his life, his attitude was, in almost all respects, entirely different from the one he had taken in his youth.

This development is markedly in the direction of the new thought on woman and her place in the community. A comparison of the work which Ibsen wrote in the sixties would show much harmony in view between the two dramatists. But Ibsen was young and was destined during his lifetime to change as much as Hebbel did, and probably for the same reason, that is, woman herself changed and thus furnished the poet with a living model of a totally different type.

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[1] In *Hebbels Anschauungen über Kunst und künstlerisches Schaffen.* In *Archiv für systematische Philosophie* III, 242 ff.

[2] *Hebbel-Probleme.*

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